

Official Report of the
One Hundred Fifty-sixth
Annual General

CONFERENCE

of The Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints

held in the Tabernacle
Salt Lake City, Utah

April 5 and 6, 1986

Official Report
of the
One Hundred Fifty-sixth
Annual General Conference

of
The Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints

held in the Tabernacle
Salt Lake City, Utah
April 5 and 6, 1986

Published by
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Salt Lake City, Utah

Copyright © 1986 Corporation of the President
of
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

All Rights Reserved
Printed in the United States of America

THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-SIXTH ANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The 156th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 5, 1986, at 10:00 A.M.

The general sessions of the conference were held at 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday, April 5 and 6, 1986. The general priesthood meeting was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, April 6, 1985 at 6:00 P.M.

President Ezra Taft Benson presided at all sessions of the conference and conducted the Sunday morning session. President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday morning and Sunday afternoon sessions. President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday afternoon and general priesthood sessions.

Television and radio stations carried portions or all of some of the conference sessions to large audiences throughout the world. In addition, the general sessions and the priesthood session were carried via satellite transmission to more than 1,000 stake centers. The general priesthood session was also carried by closed-circuit transmission to approximately 892 locations in many countries.

General Authorities present

The following General Authorities of the Church attended one or more of the general sessions:

The First Presidency: Ezra Taft Benson, Gordon B. Hinckley, and Thomas S. Monson.

The Council of the Twelve:

¹Howard W. Hunter, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal

A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, and M. Russell Ballard.

The First Quorum of the Seventy:

Presidents: Carlos E. Asay, Dean L. Larsen, Richard G. Scott, Marion D. Hanks, Wm. Grant Bangerter, Jack H. Goaslind, and Robert L. Backman. *Additional Members of the Seventy:* A. Theodore Tuttle, Franklin D. Richards, Theodore M. Burton, Paul H. Dunn, Hartman Rector, Jr., Loren C. Dunn, Robert L. Simpson, Rex D. Pinegar, J. Thomas Fyans, Adney Y. Komatsu, Joseph B. Wirthlin, Gene R. Cook, Charles Didier, William R. Bradford, George P. Lee, John H. Groberg, Jacob de Jager, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Royden G. Derrick, Robert E. Wells, James M. Paramore, Hugh W. Pinnock, F. Enzo Busche, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Ronald E. Poelman, Derek A. Cuthbert, Rex C. Reeve, Sr., F. Burton Howard, Ted E. Brewerton, Angel Abrea, John K. Carmack, Russell C. Taylor, Robert B. Harbertson, Devere Harris, Spencer H. Osborn, Philip T. Sonntag, John Sonnenberg, F. Arthur Kay, Keith W. Wilcox, Victor L. Brown, H. Burke Peterson, J. Richard Clarke, Hans B. Ringger, Waldo P. Call, Helio da Rocha Camargo, H. Verlan Andersen, George I. Cannon, Francis M. Gibbons, and Gardner H. Russell.

The Presiding Bishopric: Robert D. Hales, Henry B. Eyring, and Glenn L. Pace.

Emeritus General Authorities:

Eldred G. Smith, Sterling W. Sill, Henry D. Taylor, Bernard P. Brockbank, James A. Cullimore, Joseph Anderson, and John H. Vandenberg.¹

¹President Marion G. Romney and Elder O. Leslie Stone were excused due to ill health.

Other authorities present

Other authorities of the Church in attendance included Regional Representatives, presidents of stakes and their counselors, presidents of temples,

bishops of wards, and presidencies and members of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood quorums.

Many general, stake, and ward auxiliary officers also attended.

FIRST DAY MORNING MEETING

FIRST SESSION

The first general session of the 156th Annual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 5, 1986, at 10:00 A.M. President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The music for the opening session was provided by the Tabernacle Choir with Donald Ripplinger conducting and Robert Cundick at the organ.

Prior to the meeting the Tabernacle Choir sang "For All the Saints" without announcement.

President Hinckley made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked me to conduct this session.

We greet you this morning from the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City in this, the first general session of the 156th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We welcome all who are participating in this conference, whether seated here in the Tabernacle or in the overflow session in the nearby Assembly Hall where Elders Dean L. Larsen and F. Enzo Busche are seated on the stand, or who are participating by satellite transmission, radio, cable, or tele-

vision. These proceedings are being carried by satellite to over one thousand stake centers throughout the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico.

We acknowledge the General Authorities of the Church, all of whom are in attendance except President Marion G. Romney and Elder O. Leslie Stone who because of illness are unable to be with us. We acknowledge the Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary general presidencies who are seated on the stand. We extend a special welcome to government, education, and civic leaders who are present.

We note with sadness the death of President Spencer W. Kimball, the twelfth President of the Church, who passed away on Tuesday, November 5, 1985 in his ninety-first year, after having served as an Apostle of the Lord, Jesus Christ, for a period of over forty-two years. During the last twelve of these years he served as God's prophet on the earth and as President of the Church. We pay our honor and respect to this great deceased leader whose ministry blessed the lives of thousands.

The Tabernacle Choir under the direction of Donald H. Ripplinger with Robert Cundick at the organ opened this session by singing "For All the Saints." The choir will now sing "I Stand All Amazed at the Love Jesus Offers Me." Following the singing, the invocation will be offered by Elder Rex D. Pinegar, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "I Stand All Amazed."

Elder Rex D. Pinegar offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

It will now be our privilege to listen to President Ezra Taft Benson, President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

President Ezra Taft Benson

My beloved brethren and sisters, as we commence another general conference of the Church, I earnestly seek an interest in your faith and prayers that what I say may bless and edify our souls. I realize my dependence upon the Lord, and I also know that Jesus Christ is the head of this church and that through Him we can do all things that are needful.

Dedication, devotion, and service

I commend those of you who are present here this morning, as well as you who are listening or watching these proceedings and those who will later take the opportunity to hear or read the messages of this conference.

Our hearts are filled with overwhelming gratitude to you for all you do to contribute to the building of the kingdom of God on earth. Surely the Lord is pleased with the consecrated time, love, and generous support of so many of His Saints throughout the world.

Your dedication, devotion, and service are indications that faith has indeed increased in the earth. Seldom have the efforts of so few resulted in the blessing of so many!

Watchmen—what of the night?

As I have sought direction from the Lord, I have had reaffirmed in my mind and heart the declaration of the Lord to "say nothing but repentance unto this generation" (D&C 6:9; 11:9).

This has been a theme of every latter-day prophet, along with their testimony that Jesus is the Christ and that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God.

Repentance was the cry of our late and great prophet, Spencer W. Kimball. This theme permeated his talks and the pages of his writings, such as his marvelous book *The Miracle of Forgiveness*. And it must be our cry today, both to member and to non-member alike—repent.

Watchmen—what of the night? We must respond by saying that all is not well in Zion. As Moroni counseled, we must cleanse the inner vessel (see Alma 60:23), beginning first with ourselves, then with our families, and finally with the Church.

Changed people!

A prophet of God stated, "Ye shall clear away the bad according as the good shall grow . . . until the good shall overcome the bad" (Jacob 5:66). It takes a Zion people to make a Zion society, and we must prepare for that.

During the past few years a number of resources have been set in place in the Church to help us. New editions of the scriptures have been published—are we taking advantage of them? More temples are located closer to our people—are we going to the house of the Lord more frequently? The consolidated meeting schedule was set up—are we taking advantage of the increased time with our families? A special home evening manual was

provided—are we using it? A new hymnal has just been published—are we singing more songs of the heart? (See D&C 25:12.) And so the list goes on and on. We have received much help. We don't need changed programs now as much as we need changed people!

We remember our beloved President Kimball for many marvelous words of counsel, among which was his encouragement to “lengthen our stride.” We needed that direction, for the Book of Mormon warns us of the tactics of the adversary in the last days: “And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say: All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well—and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell” (2 Nephi 28:21).

There are many “awake” passages in the Book of Mormon, such as: “O that ye would awake; awake from a deep sleep, yea, even from the sleep of hell . . . awake . . . [and] put on the armor of righteousness. Shake off the chains with which ye are bound, and come forth out of obscurity, and arise from the dust” (2 Nephi 1:13, 23). As a people, it seems we can survive persecution easier and better than we can peace and prosperity.

Sexual immorality

The plaguing sin of this generation is sexual immorality. This, the Prophet Joseph said, would be the source of more temptations, more buffetings, and more difficulties for the elders of Israel than any other. (See *Journal of Discourses*, 8:55.)

President Joseph F. Smith said that sexual impurity would be one of the three dangers that would threaten the Church within—and so it does. (See *Gospel Doctrine*, pp. 312–13.) It permeates our society.

In the category of sins, the Book of Mormon places unchastity next to murder. (See Alma 39:5.) As Alma states, “Now . . . I would that ye

should repent and forsake your sins, and go no more after the lusts of your eyes, . . . for except ye do this ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God” (Alma 39:9). If we are to cleanse the inner vessel, we must forsake immorality and be clean.

Do more with the Book of Mormon

Unless we read the Book of Mormon and give heed to its teachings, the Lord has stated in section 84 of the Doctrine and Covenants that the whole Church is under condemnation: “And this condemnation resteth upon the children of Zion, even all” (D&C 84:56). The Lord continues: “And they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given them, not only to say, but to do according to that which I have written” (D&C 84:57).

Now we not only need to *say* more about the Book of Mormon, but we need to *do* more with it. Why? The Lord answers: “That they may bring forth fruit meet for their Father’s kingdom; otherwise there remaineth a scourge and judgment to be poured out upon the children of Zion” (D&C 84:58). We have felt that scourge and judgment!

The Prophet Joseph said that “the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than any other book” (Book of Mormon, Introduction). The Book of Mormon has not been, nor is it yet, the center of our personal study, family teaching, preaching, and missionary work. Of this we must repent.

President Romney on reading the Book of Mormon

I do not know of a man living today who has been more true to the Book of Mormon than President

Marion G. Romney. In a general conference address, he declared that the Book of Mormon was "the most effective piece of missionary literature we have." He quoted the Doctrine and Covenants, which states that "the Book of Mormon and the holy scriptures are given of me for your instruction" (D&C 33:16) and that "the elders, priests and teachers of this church shall teach the principles of my gospel, which are in the Bible and the Book of Mormon" (D&C 42:12). President Romney added, "It is of course obvious that unless we read, study, and learn the principles which are in the Book of Mormon, we, the elders, priests, and teachers of this church, cannot comply with this direction to teach them."

"But there is another reason why we should read it," President Romney continued. "By doing so we will fill and refresh our minds with the constant flow of that 'water' which Jesus said would be in us—a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14). We must obtain a continuing supply of this water if we are to resist evil and retain the blessings of being born again. . . .

"If we would avoid adopting the evils of the world, we must pursue a course which will daily feed our minds with and call them back to the things of the Spirit. I know of no better way to do this than by reading the Book of Mormon. . . ."

And then he concluded: "And so, I counsel you, my beloved brothers and sisters and friends everywhere, to make reading in the Book of Mormon a few minutes each day a lifelong practice. . . ."

"I feel certain that if, in our homes, parents will read from the Book of Mormon prayerfully and regularly, both by themselves and with their children, the spirit of that great book will come to permeate our homes and all who dwell therein. The spirit of reverence will increase; mutual respect and consideration for each other will grow. The spirit of contention will depart.

Parents will counsel their children in greater love and wisdom. Children will be more responsive and submissive to that counsel. Righteousness will increase. Faith, hope, and charity—the pure love of Christ—will abound in our homes and lives, bringing in their wake peace, joy, and happiness" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1960, pp. 110–13).

Pride

May I now discuss a subject of grave concern that deserves deeper development than we have time. It is the subject of pride.

In the scriptures there is no such thing as righteous pride. It is always considered as a sin. We are not speaking of a wholesome view of self-worth, which is best established by a close relationship with God. But we are speaking of pride as the universal sin, as someone has described it.

Mormon writes that "the pride of this nation, or the people of the Nephites, hath proven their destruction" (Moroni 8:27). The Lord says in the Doctrine and Covenants, "Beware of pride, lest ye become as the Nephites of old" (D&C 38:39).

"Humble yourselves before God"

Essentially, pride is a "my will" rather than "thy will" approach to life. The opposite of pride is humbleness, meekness, submissiveness (see Alma 13:28), or teachableness.

In the early days of the restored church, the Lord warned two of its prominent members about pride. To Oliver Cowdery, He said, "Beware of pride, lest thou shouldst enter into temptation" (D&C 23:1). To Emma Smith, He said, "Continue in the spirit of meekness, and beware of pride" (D&C 25:14).

"Thou shalt not be proud in thy heart," the Lord warns us (D&C 42:40). "Humble yourselves before God," says the Book of Mormon (Mosiah 4:10).

When the earth is cleansed by burning in the last days, the proud shall be as stubble. (See 3 Nephi 25:1; D&C 29:9; 64:24.)

The great and spacious building which Lehi saw was the pride of the world where the multitude of the earth was gathered. (See 1 Nephi 11:35-36.) Those who walked the straight and narrow path and held onto the word of God and partook of the love of God were mocked and scorned by those in the building. (See 1 Nephi 8:20, 27, 33; 11:25.)

"The humble followers of Christ" are few (2 Nephi 28:14).

Not my will but thine

Pride does not look up to God and care about what is right. It looks sideways to man and argues who is right. Pride is manifest in the spirit of contention.

Was it not through pride that the devil became the devil? Christ wanted to serve. The devil wanted to rule. Christ wanted to bring men to where He was. The devil wanted to be above men.

Christ removed self as the force in His perfect life. It was not *my* will, but *thine* be done.

Pride is characterized by "What do I want out of life?" rather than by "What would God have me do with my life?" It is self-will as opposed to God's will. It is the fear of man over the fear of God.

Humility responds to God's will—to the fear of His judgments and the needs of those around us. To the proud, the applause of the world rings in their ears; to the humble, the applause of heaven warms their hearts.

Someone has said, "Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man." Of one brother, the Lord said, "I, the Lord, am not well pleased with him, for he seeketh to excel, and he is not sufficiently meek before me" (D&C 58:41).

The "learned, and the rich"

The two groups in the Book of Mormon that seemed to have the greatest difficulty with pride are the "learned, and the rich" (2 Nephi 28:15). But the word of God can pull down pride. (See Alma 4:19.)

With pride, there are many curses. With humility, there come many blessings. For example, "Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers" (D&C 112:10). The humble will "be made strong, and blessed from on high, and receive knowledge" (D&C 1:28). The Lord is "merciful unto those who confess their sins with humble hearts" (D&C 61:2). Humility can turn away God's anger. (See Helaman 11:11.)

Must cleanse the inner vessel

My beloved brethren and sisters, as we cleanse the inner vessel, there will have to be changes made in our own personal lives, in our families, and in the Church. The proud do not change to improve, but defend their position by rationalizing. Repentance means change, and it takes a humble person to change. But we can do it.

We have made some wonderful strides in the past. We will be lengthening our stride in the future. To do so, we must first cleanse the inner vessel by awaking and arising, being morally clean, using the Book of Mormon in a manner so that God will lift the condemnation, and finally conquering pride by humbling ourselves.

We can do it. I know we can. That we will do so is my prayer for all of us. God bless you for all the good you have done and will be doing. I leave my blessings on all of you and do so in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Know This, That Every Soul Is Free" without announcement.

President Hinckley

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, has just spoken to us.

The Tabernacle Choir then sang "Know This, That Every Soul Is Free."

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder David B. Haight of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder David B. Haight

My dear brethren and sisters, I rejoice with you in being present this morning to hear the voice of our prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson, and to feel of his spirit and loving concern for all of mankind as he has counseled the Church and the people of the world.

Principle of common consent

This conference is historic because we will be given the opportunity to raise our hands to personally sustain a newly called prophet of God, his counselors, and other Church leaders. A solemn assembly grants to members the right to participate in the principle of common consent, instituted by revelation, authorizing members to sustain those called to official positions. Individual histories and personal accounts of this historic conference will be a highlight throughout our lives.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints proclaims to the world that this church is a restoration of Christ's church. A restoration was necessary because prophets and Apostles, who were the foundation of the Lord's original church, were put to death or otherwise taken. The Church today is built on a foundation of prophets and Apostles, with Jesus Christ as its chief cornerstone. It is therefore not a reformation, a revision, a reorganization, or a mere sect. It is the Church of Jesus Christ restored in these latter days.

Continuous revelation from the Lord

A distinguishing feature of the Church is the claim to continuous revelation from the Lord—"the making known of divine truth by communications from its heavens" (James E. Talmage, *The Articles of Faith*, 12th ed. [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1924], p. 296). Today, the Lord's Church is guided by the same relationship with Deity that existed in previous dispensations.

This claim is not made lightly. I know there is revelation, as I am a witness to sacred things also experienced by others who administer His work.

The principle of revelation by the Holy Ghost is a fundamental principle of the Lord's Church. Prophets of God receive revelation by this process. Individual members of the Church may also receive revelation to confirm truth. The Prophet Joseph Smith told us that "no man can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelation" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1977], p. 328).

"Give heed unto all his words and commandments"

On April 6, 1830—the day the Church was organized in this dispensation—the Lord revealed to members of His church how they should regard the words of His appointed prophet with these instructions:

"Thou shalt give heed unto all his words and commandments which he shall give unto you as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me;

"For his word ye shall receive, *as if from mine own mouth*, in all patience and faith" (D&C 21:4-5; italics added).

From the day of that revelation, faithful members of the Church have looked to the First Presidency for their instruction, and Zion has prospered.

Revelation from the Lord and sustaining by the people

When one Church President passes away, how is a new President selected?

In 1835 the Lord gave a revelation on this matter that provides for orderly succession. The revelation states that the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles is a body equal in authority to the First Presidency. (See D&C 107:24.) That means that when the President of the Church dies, the First Presidency is dissolved and the Quorum of the Twelve automatically becomes the presiding body of the Church. That pattern was established with the death of the Church's first President, Joseph Smith.

Following the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph and his brother Hyrum in 1844, the Quorum of the Twelve, with Brigham Young as quorum president, presided over the Church for the next three and one-half years.

Then, on the banks of the Missouri River in Winter Quarters on December 5, 1847, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles met in council at the home of Orson Hyde. Each of the twelve Apostles expressed his views regarding the matter of reorganizing the First Presidency. Present in that meeting was Ezra T. Benson, great-grandfather of President Ezra Taft Benson. On that occasion, Brigham Young, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, was unanimously sustained by members of that body as President of the Church. He selected

Heber C. Kimball and Willard Richards as Counselors. This action created a new First Presidency, which was later sustained by the unanimous vote of the Saints at a general conference of the Church held December 24, 1847, in a log tabernacle constructed at Winter Quarters by the Saints for this special conference. This action was later ratified by members of the Church at conferences in Iowa, Salt Lake City, and the British Isles.

This divinely revealed procedure for installing a new First Presidency of the Church—revelation from the Lord and sustaining by the people—has been followed to our present day. The First Presidency is to be "upheld by the confidence, faith, and prayer of the church" (D&C 107:22).

Prophet called of God

Several years ago President Spencer W. Kimball, then a member of the Twelve Apostles, on such an occasion as this, said:

"It is reassuring to know that [a new President is] . . . not elected through committees and conventions with all their conflicts, criticisms, and by the vote of men, but [is] called of God and then sustained by the people. . . .

"The pattern divine allows for no errors, no conflicts, no ambitions, no ulterior motives. The Lord has reserved for himself the calling of his leaders over his church" (*Ensign*, Jan. 1973, p. 33).

Calling and preparation of President Ezra Taft Benson

The calling of Ezra Taft Benson as the thirteenth President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will long be remembered, particularly by the seven newest members of the Quorum of the Twelve, who experienced for the first time the holy direction we received in the calling of a President of the Church. After much fasting and prayer, and the seeking of personal

revelation to know the mind and will of God, it was confirmed to our souls who should be called—even Ezra Taft Benson. This I know! With that heavenly confirmation to each of those present, Ezra Taft Benson was ordained and set apart on Sunday, November 10, 1985, as prophet, seer, and revelator, and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

What kind of preparation had the Lord given to this servant whom we will sustain as God's prophet, seer, and revelator?

He was reared on a small farm in Whitney, Idaho, the eldest of eleven children. His stalwart parents had great faith in God. They taught their children that, in spite of difficulties and hardships, they could always go to the Lord and He would give them strength and help.

President Benson's father lovingly counseled his young son: "Remember that whatever you do or wherever you are, you are never alone. Our Heavenly Father is always near. You can reach out and receive His aid through prayer." On many occasions, our beloved prophet has stated: "[This is] prized above any other advice I have ever received. It has become an integral part of me, an anchor, a constant source of strength" (Frederick W. Babbel, *On Wings of Faith* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1972], p. 85).

Prayer has sustained him throughout his life, including during his early missionary experiences in England, where on one occasion his very life was in peril.

Both President and Sister Benson came from stalwart families. They have reared their family with the same teachings they received in their early homes—with a fervent trust in Almighty God.

Europe after World War II

Called as a new Apostle in 1943, Elder Benson soon received from the

First Presidency a most challenging and significant assignment. He was assigned to give assistance to members of the Church in Europe who had been devastated by World War II. He witnessed the ravages of war. He saw the hungry, the cold, the destitute.

Frederick W. Babbel, called to serve as executive secretary to Elder Benson while he was in Europe, wrote to his family:

"The Lord knew what he was doing when he sent [Elder] Benson over here. He is a living apostle of God in every way. . . . I continue to marvel at his unwavering faith, his unflinching courage, his resolute determination and undaunted spirit. . . . He not only speaks to God, but he listens, and I'm sure God speaks with him even as he did with his apostles of old. . . . [He is] one of the humblest, most devoted men I have ever known, so kind in spirit and manner . . . a man surpassing all men I have known" (*On Wings of Faith*, p. 125).

In this special assignment, President Benson was responsible for perhaps the largest distribution of welfare supplies to members that has been undertaken. Thousands of tons of food, clothing, bedding, and medical supplies were delivered to Saints in thirteen nations. It is significant that he will now be sustained as the President of the Church during the fiftieth anniversary of the welfare program.

During that historic mission away from his family, Elder Benson held meetings with the Saints, reorganized the branches and missions, and lifted members' spirits. To them he was an angel of mercy.

Only by prayer and divine intervention was he able to accomplish that mission and gain entrance into some countries. He said, "I assure you I know the source of the success which attended our labors. . . . It would [have been impossible] . . . to accomplish the mission . . . without the directing power of the Almighty" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1947, p. 152).

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture

For eight years he served in the cabinet of the president of the United States. Before the first Cabinet meeting, then-Secretary Benson suggested to President-elect Eisenhower that they commence with prayer. President Eisenhower spoke of the weight of responsibility on the new administration and the need for divine guidance, then called on the secretary of agriculture to open the meeting with prayer. That practice continued throughout the Eisenhower administration.

As secretary of agriculture, he met with world leaders and traveled to most parts of the world. That experience also found him threatened by whirlwinds of the politically ambitious. But seeking strength from the Almighty, as he had done so often in the past, he stood firm in principle and survived efforts to bring about a more politically expedient course of action. Today, the name of Ezra Taft Benson is synonymous with integrity.

Love for all people and for his family

In things that matter most, President Benson has few peers. I know he loves the Lord and depends upon Him for strength, inspiration, and direction. He loves all our Father's children everywhere and will go to extraordinary lengths to respond to their spiritual and temporal needs. He loves people of all faiths, of all creeds, of all colors, and of differing philosophies. I know I can speak for all of my Brethren of the General Authorities in saying that we have felt of his love and concern for each of us and for our families and loved ones. We wholeheartedly reciprocate that love to President and Sister Benson and their family.

President Benson loves his family and keeps in constant touch with them—his six children (all faithful in

the Church), thirty-four grandchildren, and twenty great-grandchildren. He and Sister Benson have a motto in their family, that in this life and the next there will be “no empty chairs.” Can you think of a more heavenly goal?

Witness for Jesus Christ

As the Lord's prophet, he stands as a preeminent witness for Jesus Christ. He has borne witness of the name of Christ in almost every nation of the world.

I bear my personal witness to you, my brethren and sisters, that President Ezra Taft Benson has been chosen by our Heavenly Father to “move the cause of Zion in mighty power for good.” As with Joseph Smith, the Lord can say of President Benson, “his diligence I know, and his prayers I have heard” (D&C 21:7).

May God bless each of us with listening ears, to heed the counsel of our new First Presidency, whom we love and sustain with all of our hearts, to the end that our lives will be blessed and the cause of Zion will prosper and expand throughout the world, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder David B. Haight, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing “High on the Mountain Top a Banner is Unfurled.” Following the singing, we shall hear from Elder Richard G. Scott, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation sang “High on the Mountain Top.”

Elder Richard G. Scott

I come to you in humility, mindful of my own weakness, yet prayerful that the preparation preceding this message may qualify me to act as an instrument in the hands of the Lord to bring help to some who are in serious need.

We love you

I reach out to you who yearn for companionship at almost any price and are tempted to believe it can be purchased or bartered. You may feel excluded from some circles of friendship, but don't look downward for companionship where the price of entry is abandonment of principle and the sacrifice of ideals.

We love you, and want your happiness more than you can possibly imagine.

Come back

You have learned that fair-weather friends are always available at the bottom of the path that leads to worldliness and unrighteousness, and that their companionship always comes with many strings attached. You have seen how each seeks only to satisfy selfish interests. In quiet moments of reflection, you realize that such companionship is hollow and valueless and leads to weakened resolve, compromised ideals, and eventual yielding to serious sin.

To you who have taken this path, I plead, come back. Come back to the cool, refreshing waters of personal purity. Come back to the warmth and security of your Father in Heaven's love. Come back to the serenity that distills from the decision to live the commandments of your Elder Brother, Jesus the Christ.

Apply the teachings from the Book of Mormon

You know well the process of repentance and the vital role of a judge in Israel, yet you may have difficulty taking that first step to return. With all the love of my heart, may I offer you a way back. You can begin alone and proceed at your own pace.

I invite you to study carefully the Book of Mormon, to ponder each page and pray for understanding. Strive to apply its teachings in your own life and to find within it the companionship that comes to all who with real intent search its message and diligently strive to apply its teachings in their lives. Through the multitude of verses that speak of the Savior, the Redeemer, the Prince of Peace, seek prayerfully to know Him. Ask our Father to strengthen your faith in His Son and to plant in your heart a love of His teachings.

May I share with you some of the insight that will come as you carefully study the Book of Mormon.

Of his own repentance, Alma declares:

"I was . . . in the most bitter pain and anguish of soul; and never, until I did cry out unto the Lord Jesus Christ for mercy, did I receive a remission of my sins. But behold, I did cry unto him and I did find peace to my soul.

"And now, . . . I have told you this that ye may learn wisdom, . . . that there is no other way or means whereby man can be saved, only in and through Christ" (Alma 38:8-9).

Forgiveness through faith in Christ

From this scripture you can see that suffering does not bring forgiveness. It comes through faith in Christ and obedience to His teachings, so that His gift of redemption can apply.

You will learn that sincere, repeated prayer, study, and meditation bring a fuller understanding of the atonement of Jesus Christ. Consider His statement from the Book of Mormon:

"Behold, I have come . . . to bring redemption unto the world, to save the world from sin.

"Therefore, whoso repenteth and cometh unto me as a little child, him will I receive, for of such is the kingdom of God. . . . Therefore repent, and come unto me . . . and be saved" (3 Nephi 9:21–22).

Selfishness at root of sin

As you ponder such teachings, your own forgiveness will seem more attainable. As you pray from the depth of humility, with total honesty, our Father will hear you and the easing of the burden will begin.

By studying the lives recorded in the Book of Mormon, you will see that selfishness is at the root of all sin. It leads to unrighteous acts that bring anguish and misery.

You will observe that the antidote for selfishness is love, especially love of the Lord. Love can overpower the undermining effect of selfishness. Love engenders faith in Christ's plan of happiness, provides courage to begin the process of repentance, strengthens the resolve to be obedient to His teachings, and opens the door of service, welcoming in the feelings of self-worth and of being loved and needed.

The Lord will forgive

In time, with the help of a caring, compassionate bishop, you will complete the process of repentance. Then you will have peace and the assurance—even the witness of the Spirit—that the Lord has forgiven you. For some, full relief comes there. Yet there are others who cannot forgive themselves for past transgressions, even knowing the Lord has forgiven them. Somehow they feel compelled to

continually condemn themselves and to suffer by frequently recalling the details of past mistakes.

Should there be one such within the sound of my voice, I plead with all of my soul that the Lord will touch your heart and cause you to ponder his declaration:

"Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, *remember them no more.*

"By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them" (D&C 58:42–43; italics added).

Christ can bring salvation

Can't you see that to continue to suffer for sins, when there has been proper repentance and forgiveness of the Lord, is not prompted by the Savior but by the master of deceit, whose goal has always been to bind and enslave the children of our Father in Heaven? Satan would encourage you to continue to relive the details of past mistakes, knowing that such thoughts make progress, growth, and service difficult to attain. It is as though Satan ties strings to the mind and body so that he can manipulate one like a puppet, discouraging personal achievement.

I testify that Jesus Christ paid the price and satisfied the demands of justice for all who are obedient to His teachings. Thus, full forgiveness is granted, and the distressing effects of sin need no longer persist in one's life. Indeed, they *cannot persist* if one truly understands the meaning of Christ's atonement.

Ammon, in the Book of Mormon, shows you how to respond when thoughts of past, forgiven transgressions return. Recalling his missionary experiences among the Lamanites, Ammon said:

"Behold, thousands of them do rejoice and have been brought into the fold of God."

Aaron, his brother, cautioned:

"Ammon, I fear that thy joy doth carry thee away unto boasting."

Ammon replied:

"I do not boast in my own strength, nor in my own wisdom; but behold, . . . my heart is brim with joy, and I will rejoice in my God. . . .

"Who could have supposed that our God would have been so merciful as to have snatched us from our awful, sinful, and polluted state?

"Oh then, why did he not consign us to an awful destruction, yea, why did he not let the sword of his justice fall upon us, and doom us to eternal despair?

" . . . Behold, he did not exercise his justice upon us, but in his great mercy hath brought us . . . the salvation of our souls" (Alma 26:4, 10-11, 17, 19-20).

The miracle of forgiveness

That is the secret, stated simply by a servant of God. When memory of prior mistakes encroaches upon your mind, turn your thoughts to Jesus Christ, to the miracle of forgiveness and renewal that comes through Him. Then your suffering will be replaced by joy, gratitude, and thanksgiving for His love.

If you, through poor judgment, were to cover your shoes with mud, would you leave them that way? Of course not. You would cleanse and restore them. Would you then gather the residue of mud and place it in an envelope to show others the mistake that you made? No. Neither should you continue to relive forgiven sin. Every time such thoughts come into your mind, turn your heart in gratitude to the Savior, who gave His life that we, through faith in Him and obedience to His teachings, can overcome transgression and conquer its depressing influence in our lives. I promise you that if you will read the Book of Mormon with sincerity of purpose, striving to be obedient to its precepts, you will find

two beloved friends. They will change your life and give it meaning and purpose as they have mine.

Book of Mormon and Jesus Christ

The first friend is the Book of Mormon itself. It will make you feel good and stimulate you to worthwhile accomplishment. You will be uplifted and receive greater wisdom and insight. That will require much pondering, prayer, and sincere application of the counsel received. In the process, this book will become your beloved friend.

You will also discover the greatest friend of all, Jesus the Christ, our Savior and Redeemer, full of perfect love and boundless compassion, with the power to forgive and forget. It is difficult for me to speak of Him, for I love Him so deeply. May the Spirit bear witness of that love and somehow touch your heart that you may find the courage to take those steps that will bring you peace and tranquility, that will restore your feelings of self-worth and place you on the path to happiness.

We love you; we need you. Please come back. Don't wait until all is in perfect order. We'll walk beside you. We love you. Please come back. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Father, Cheer Our Souls Tonight" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Elder Richard G. Scott, for your beautiful message. Thanks to the choir for the singing of that beautiful hymn—"Father, Cheer Our Souls Tonight."

Elder M. Russell Ballard, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our next speaker.

Elder M. Russell Ballard

My dear brothers and sisters, my wife, Barbara, our family, and I express to you our deep appreciation for your messages of love and support since my call last October to the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Calling of an Apostle

All of my life I have held the Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in great esteem. From the early days of my childhood, the term *Apostle* has been one that my father and mother used with deep reverence. Since my ordination to this special calling, I have had many hours to ponder the sacred responsibility that now rests upon my shoulders.

The calling of an Apostle is to be a special witness of the name of Jesus Christ in all the world, particularly of his divinity and of his bodily resurrection from the dead. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles is "a Traveling Presiding High Council, to officiate in the name of the Lord, under the direction of the Presidency of the Church, agreeable to the institution of heaven; to build up the church, and regulate all the affairs of the same in all nations, first unto the Gentiles and secondly unto the Jews" (D&C 107:33).

The Lord said to Thomas B. Marsh, the President of the Council of the Twelve:

"Now, I say unto you, and what I say unto you, I say unto all the Twelve: Arise and gird up your loins, take up your cross, follow me, and feed my sheep.

"And again, I say unto you, that whosoever ye shall send in my name, by the voice of your brethren, the Twelve, duly recommended and authorized by you, shall have power to open the door of my kingdom unto any nation whithersoever ye shall send them" (D&C 112:14, 21).

South America dedicated

Twelve days ago I returned from South America, where I had visited the people of Uruguay, Argentina, and Colombia. Last December I visited Peru and Brazil. Reflecting upon these two recent assignments, I observed the dramatic growth of the Church among these people.

Elder Parley P. Pratt visited South America in 1851. The work was attempted again in 1925. On Christmas Day of 1925, in the park of Tres de Febrero in Buenos Aires, Argentina, my grandfather, Elder Melvin J. Ballard, dedicated South America for the preaching of the gospel. I quote from the dedicatory prayer:

"Bless the presidents, governors, and the leading officials of these South American countries, that they may kindly receive us and give us permission to open the doors of salvation to the people of these lands. . . .

"And now, oh, Father, by authority of the blessing and appointment by the President of the Church, and *by the authority of the holy apostleship* which I have, I turn the key, unlock, and open the door for the preaching of the Gospel in all these South American nations, and do rebuke and command to be stayed every power that would oppose the preaching of the Gospel in these lands; and we do bless and dedicate these nations of this land for the preaching of thy Gospel. And we do all this that salvation may come to all men, and that thy name may be honored and glorified in this part of the land of Zion" (*Crusader for Righteousness* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966], p. 81; italics added).

The words "by the authority of the holy apostleship" have special meaning to me now as my ministry bears that same authority to accomplish the purposes of our Heavenly Father.

Early missionary work—South America

The original recorded history of the three General Authority missionaries who visited Buenos Aires in 1925 was found there a few days before my arrival this last March 14. I read with great interest of the extreme difficulties that they encountered. The trip from Salt Lake City to Buenos Aires for Elders Melvin J. Ballard, Rey L. Pratt, and Rulon S. Wells was by land and sea, taking thirty-four days. In comparison, my recent trip covering the same distance took twenty-one hours.

There were only four members of the Church in South America in 1925; they greeted the missionaries upon their arrival. To conserve resources, the missionaries rented one hotel room to house all three of them. They moved several times until they finally located a low-cost apartment in which the three of them could live.

Efforts to advertise the first public meetings in the Buenos Aires newspapers were fruitless. The newspapers refused to print an ad. Elder Pratt prepared a handbill in Spanish. Elder Ballard, who spoke only English, distributed these handbills each day. Elder Pratt spent most of his time translating doctrine and hymns into Spanish. Elder Wells, who spoke German, became ill and returned to Church headquarters shortly after his arrival in Argentina.

My brothers and sisters, it is difficult to express my feelings as I read of the early beginnings of missionary work in South America. I am deeply touched to realize that for nearly eight months my grandfather walked the streets of Buenos Aires giving out two hundred to five hundred handbills every day but Sunday, inviting the people to learn the message of the Restoration.

The work among the native Argentines was very difficult. Only one was baptized during the first eight months. On 4 July 1926, Grandfather said:

"The work of the Lord will grow slowly for a time here just as an oak grows slowly from an acorn. It will not shoot up in a day as does the sunflower that grows quickly and then dies. But thousands will join the Church here. It will be divided into more than one mission and will be one of the strongest in the Church. The work here is the smallest that it will ever be. The day will come when the Lamanites in this land will be given a chance. The South American Mission will be a power in the Church" (Vernon Sharp diary, in *Melvin J. Ballard*, p. 84).

Growth of the Church

Sixty years later, the Church in South America has 30 missions, with 5,140 full-time missionaries, of which approximately 60 percent are natives of South America. One hundred eighty-six stakes cover the land, with 2,148 wards and branches dotting the countryside. Approximately 776,000 members of the Church are an evidence of the fulfillment of the dedicatory prayer.

At the regional conference last month in Montevideo, President and Sister J. Thomas Fyans and I met with 3,350 Saints. President and Sister Helio R. Camargo and I met with more than 3,100 Saints in Bogota, Colombia, the following Sunday. The work is prospering in this part of the Lord's vineyard.

Faith, commitment, and love for the Lord

The effective work of the General Authorities of the past and of those of today is evidenced in the faithful lives of the Saints. Thousands of missionaries have served with distinction. Dedicated men and women are leading the Church in their own countries in a magnificent way. It is a joy to see second- and third-generation members living worthy to be leaders in South America.

My brothers and sisters, as I visited with the Saints in South America, the words of Nephi came to mind:

"He doeth not anything save it be for the benefit of the world; for he loveth the world, even that he layeth down his own life that he may draw all men unto him. Wherefore, he commandeth none that they shall not partake of his salvation" (2 Nephi 26:24).

The gospel of Jesus Christ radiates in the faces of the Saints. They express faith and commitment and love for the Lord. They are seeking to be worthy of the full blessings of the gospel. Several Aaronic Priesthood boys dressed in their Scout uniforms greeted me in Bogota. Without hesitation they all told me they will serve as missionaries as soon as they are old enough. With such a spirit, the future of the Church in South America will be in good hands.

I visited the temple in Buenos Aires. Feelings of gratitude welled up within me to know that within the four dedicated temples of South America the fulness of the gospel is blessing the members of the Church.

An example of the marvelous commitment of the Saints of South America was demonstrated by the dear sisters hand crocheting sixty-four altar cloths for the Buenos Aires Temple when only seven were requested.

Responsibility to prepare for temple blessings

My dear brothers and sisters, as a member of the Council of the Twelve, I now know as never before that we live in a big world. Nearly five billion of our Heavenly Father's children live on it. The responsibility of taking the gospel to them rests upon our shoulders. I am impressed, as I now start to see the larger picture, that the stake presidents must take more of the responsibility for preparing their people to receive all the blessings of the gospel. Bishops and branch presidents must do likewise. Our work is not complete until our Father's children enter the temple to receive all of the necessary ordinances to prepare them for celestial living in the presence of our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

Teaching and preparing the members of the Church to be worthy of the temple blessings rests upon the shoulders of the priesthood. There is no substitute, in my opinion, for inspired local leaders. I was most impressed with the conversion stories told by the stake presidencies in Bogota. One stake president, who has served for more than eight years, reported that he was called after only two and one-half years of membership in the Church. The Lord does bless his leaders when they put their trust in him.

Understanding of the Lord's plan

The Church is organized properly. We need to be sure that every man learns his duty and acts "in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence" (see D&C 107:99).

It seems clear to me, as this great work continues to roll forth, that the leaders of the Church at every level, and particularly at the stake and ward levels, need to understand God's plan for his children and then teach these principles to their people.

The building up of the Church will surely be enhanced if all Church leaders will teach the pure, simple, doctrinal truths that bring the children of God to a spiritual understanding. The Lord said:

"And I give unto you a commandment that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom.

"Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you" (D&C 88:77-78).

In my judgment, the greatest motivator that we have in the Church is to have Church members understand the plan of salvation. Stake presidents and bishops, you are the key to having your members come to this understanding.

Every leader should strive to motivate the people to good works by teaching the doctrines of the kingdom. The scriptures are our text, for "in them ye think ye have eternal life" (John 5:39). From them we glean the truths that will open to us a clear understanding of man's eternal possibilities.

Power of priesthood to bless lives of the Saints

I very humbly commit to you, my dear brothers and sisters, that in my calling as a member of the Council of the Twelve, I will do everything within my power to teach the plan of our Father in Heaven for the redemption and exaltation of his children. I will strive to clarify the truths that can provide eternal life for the sons and daughters of God. I pledge to the First Presidency and to you that I will so live that if I ever should be sent to unlock the way for the restored gospel to enter a nation of the earth, I will be prepared the way the first missionaries were when they dedicated and blessed the lands of South America.

We are living in a most exciting time. What a joy it is to know that the power of the holy priesthood is operating throughout the Church to bless the lives of the Saints. It is wonderful to know that the priesthood vested in the latter-day Apostles has, in this dispensation, opened many nations to the preaching of the gospel. Surely in the

future we will see other nations opened in the same remarkable way.

I testify to you that Jesus Christ is the Only Begotten Son of our Eternal Heavenly Father. He is our Savior, our Redeemer, our Friend and Brother. I love him with all my heart and count it the greatest privilege that could ever come to a man to be a special witness to his name throughout the world.

May the Lord bless us, my brothers and sisters, in doing his work, is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Though Deepening Trials" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Elder M. Russell Ballard, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has spoken to us, following which the choir sang "Though Deepening Trials."

President Howard W. Hunter, Acting President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us.

President Howard W. Hunter

Christ conquered death

Alexander the Great, king of Macedonia, pupil of Aristotle, conqueror of most of the known world in his time, was one of the world's great young leaders. After years of exercising military pomp and prowess and after extending his kingdom from Macedonia to Egypt and from Cyprus to India, he wept when there seemed to be no more world to conquer. Then, as evidence of just how ephemeral such power is, Alexander caught a fever and died at thirty-three years of age. The vast kingdom he had gained virtually died with him.

Quite a different young leader also died at what seems such an untimely

age of thirty-three. He likewise was a king, a pupil, and a conqueror. Yet he received no honors from man, achieved no territorial conquests, rose to no political station. So far as we know, he never held a sword nor wore even a single piece of armor. But the kingdom he established still flourishes some two thousand years later. His power was not of this world.

The differences between Alexander and this equally young Nazarene are many. But the greatest difference is in their ultimate victories. Alexander conquered lands, peoples, principalities, and earthly kingdoms. But he who is called the Perfect Leader, he who was and is the Light and Life of the world—Jesus Christ the Son of God—

conquered what neither Alexander nor any other could defeat or overcome: Jesus of Nazareth conquered death. Against the medals and monuments of centuries of men's fleeting victories stands the only monument necessary to mark the eternal triumph—an empty garden tomb.

Easter

Last week, we and all the rest of the Christian world celebrated Easter. In our great general conference of the Church, we lengthen the Easter season today to remember him and honor this pivotal event in the lives of all mankind. As Easter in the Northern Hemisphere ushers in an awakening of life following the barrenness of winter, so Christ's resurrection ushers in the blessing of immortality and the possibility of eternal life. His empty tomb proclaims to all the world, "He is not here, but is risen" (Luke 24:6). These words contain all the hope, assurance, and belief necessary to sustain us in our challenging and sometimes grief-filled lives.

Easter is the celebration of the free gift of immortality given to all men, restoring life and healing all wounds. Though all will die as part of the eternal plan of growth and development, nevertheless we can all find comfort in the Psalmist's statement, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psalm 30:5).

Triumph over physical and spiritual death

It was Job who posed what might be called the question of the ages: "If a man die, shall he live again?" (Job 14:14). Christ's answer rings down through time to this very hour: "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19).

Even with the logic of nature's regeneration and even with the testimony of that empty garden tomb, there are still those who feel the grave is a final destination. But the doctrine of the

Resurrection is the single most fundamental and crucial doctrine in the Christian religion. It cannot be overemphasized, nor can it be disregarded.

Without the Resurrection, the gospel of Jesus Christ becomes a litany of wise sayings and seemingly unexplainable miracles—but sayings and miracles with no ultimate triumph. No, the ultimate triumph is in the ultimate miracle: for the first time in the history of mankind, one who was dead raised himself into living immortality. He was the Son of God, the Son of our immortal Father in Heaven, and his triumph over physical and spiritual death is the good news every Christian tongue should speak.

Witnesses of the Resurrection

The eternal truth is that Jesus Christ arose from the grave and was the firstfruits of the Resurrection. (See 1 Corinthians 15:23.) The witnesses of this wonderful occurrence cannot be impeached.

Among the chosen witnesses are the Lord's Apostles. Indeed, the call to the holy apostleship is one of bearing witness to the world of the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Joseph Smith said, "The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it" (*History of the Church*, 3:30).

Peter, one of the Apostles chosen by the Master during His ministry, made these statements concerning the role of the Apostles as witnesses of the death and resurrection of Jesus:

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36).

"But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, . . . and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the

dead; whereof we are witnesses" (Acts 3:14-15).

"And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him" (Acts 5:32).

Apostles as witnesses

The Apostle Paul commented on what Peter had stated about the Apostles being witnesses of the death and resurrection of Jesus. These are his words:

"And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre.

"But God raised him from the dead:

"And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people" (Acts 13:29-31).

On Mars Hill in Athens, Paul said: "[God] hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31), and before King Agrippa he asked this question: "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" (Acts 26:8).

Paul bore his apostolic witness of the Resurrection again in his letter to the Saints at Corinth:

"Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? . . . For the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 9:1-2).

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. . . . In Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:20, 22).

Special witnesses of the name of Christ

I humbly testify of my privilege to bear the holy apostleship and to work daily with a modern Quorum of Twelve Apostles who are disciples of the Lord

Jesus Christ. We are to go forth as "special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world" (D&C 107:23). And so have the Apostles always testified.

In our own day, Apostles and prophets are carrying on the work of bearing witness to the world of Jesus Christ. If I may have the privilege, I wish to repeat what President Marion G. Romney, the President of our present apostolic quorum, said concerning the resurrection of Jesus. Not long ago he made this statement to a general conference of the Church:

"At this Easter season, I am grateful for this opportunity to bear witness to the resurrection of Jesus and to set forth, in part at least, the basis upon which that witness rests.

"He is risen; he is not here" (Mark 16:6). These words, eloquent in their simplicity, announced the most significant event of recorded history, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus—an event so extraordinary that even the Apostles, who had been most intimately associated with Jesus in his earthly ministry and who had been carefully taught of the coming event, had difficulty grasping the reality of its full significance. The first accounts which reached their ears 'seemed to them as idle tales' (Luke 24:11) as well they might, for millions of men had lived and died before that day. In every hill and dale men's bodies mouldered in the dust, but until that first Easter morning not one had risen from the grave. . . .

"That the whole of his mortal life moved toward this consummation, he had repeatedly taught. It was foreshadowed in his statement about laying down his life and taking it up again. To the sorrowing Martha he had said, 'I am the resurrection, and the life' (John 11:25); and to the Jews, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up' (John 2:19). . . .

"The evidence that Jesus was resurrected is conclusive" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1982, pp. 5-7; or *Ensign*, May 1982, p. 6).

Apostolic witness of the Resurrection

To the testimony of President Romney and the witnesses of my Brethren, I add my own apostolic witness that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God; that he was born into mortality and fulfilled his ministry as related in the scriptures, which record his birth, his life, his teachings, and his commandments.

In teaching his Apostles, Christ made known to them "that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again" (Mark 8:31). So it was. He was crucified and placed in the tomb. On the third day, he did arise to live again—the Savior of all mankind and the first-fruits of the Resurrection. Through this atoning sacrifice, all men shall be saved from the grave and shall live again. This always has been the testimony of the Apostles, to which I add my witness, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, President Hunter, for that great testimony.

We thank the managers and operators of the many television and radio systems and cable systems for offering their facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this conference to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

The Tabernacle Choir will sing in conclusion "Where Can I Turn for Peace?" The benediction will then be given by Elder Russell C. Taylor of the First Quorum of the Seventy, after which this conference will be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The choir sang "Where Can I Turn for Peace?"

Elder Russell C. Taylor offered the benediction.

FIRST DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

SECOND SESSION

The second general session of the 156th Annual General Conference began at 2:00 P.M. on Saturday, April 5, 1986. President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

Music for this session was provided by the combined institute choir from Utah Technical College, LDS Business College, University of Utah, Weber State College, and Utah State University under the direction of Don B. Castleton with Clay Christiansen at the organ.

At the beginning of the meeting, President Thomas S. Monson made the following remarks:

President Thomas S. Monson

My beloved brethren and sisters, President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked that I conduct this session.

We are pleased to welcome those who are gathered here in the Tabernacle for this, the second general session of the 156th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We also welcome those who are participating by means of television, cable, or radio, and many who are watching in over one thousand stake centers throughout the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico to which the conference is being carried by satellite transmission.

We note that Elders Robert L. Simpson and Yoshihiko Kikuchi are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall.

We are pleased to acknowledge especially our guests who are present this afternoon, along with general and local Church leaders and members from many parts of the world.

We express our appreciation to the owners and operators of many radio and television stations and to the owners and operators of cable systems for their cooperation in making these proceedings available to members and friends of the Church in many countries.

The music for this session will be provided by the combined institute choir from Utah Technical College, LDS Business College, University of Utah, Weber State College, and Utah State University under the direction of Don B. Castleton with Clay Christiansen at the organ.

The choir will begin this service by singing "Come, Follow Me." The invocation will be offered by Elder Franklin D. Richards, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Come, Follow Me."

Elder Franklin D. Richards offered the invocation.

President Monson

The choir will now sing "We Listen to a Prophet's Voice," following which Brother Wilford G. Edling will read the auditor's report and Brother F. Michael Watson will present the statistical report of the Church for the year 1985.

The choir sang "We Listen to a Prophet's Voice."

Auditor's Report 1985

Wilford G. Edling

We have reviewed the annual financial report of the Church as of 31 December 1985 and the operations for the year then ended. The financial statements and operations reviewed by the committee include the general funds of the Church and of other controlled organizations, the accounts of which are maintained by the Finance and Records Department of the Church. We have also examined the budgeting, accounting, and auditing procedures employed and the manner in which funds are received and expenditures are controlled. We determined that expenditures of general Church funds were authorized by the First Presidency and by budgetary procedures. The budget is authorized by the Council on Disposition of Tithes, composed of the First Presidency, the

Council of the Twelve, and the Presiding Bishopric. The Appropriations Committee, in weekly meetings, administers major expenditures under the budget.

Modern accounting technology and equipment are employed by the Finance and Records Department and other departments in keeping abreast of rapid Church expansion and changing methods of electronic data processing.

The Auditing Department, which is independent of all other departments, functions in the threefold capacity of performing financial audits, operational audits, and audits of the computer systems employed by the Church. These services are performed on a continuing basis for Church departments and other Church-controlled organizations, the accounts of which are maintained by or under the direction of the Finance and Records Department.

These comprise worldwide operations including missions, schools, administrative offices, and departmental activities. The extent and scope of the Auditing Department services in safeguarding the resources of the Church are expanding to encompass the growth and widening activities of the Church. The audits of local funds of wards and stakes are performed by stake auditors, the reports of which are reviewed by the Church Auditing Department. Incorporated businesses owned or controlled by the Church, for which accounts are not maintained in the Finance and Records Department, are audited by an internal staff of certified public accountants, independent professional auditing firms, or government regulatory agencies.

Based on our review of the annual financial report and other data, and our study of the accounting and auditing methods by which financial operations are controlled, together with continuing discussions with personnel of the Finance and Records and Auditing departments and Church legal representatives, we are of the opinion that the general funds of the Church, received and expended during the year 1985, have been properly accounted for in accordance with established procedures outlined herein.

Respectfully submitted,

Church Audit Committee
Wilford G. Edling
David M. Kennedy
Warren E. Pugh
Merrill J. Bateman
Ted E. Davis

Statistical Report 1985

F. Michael Watson

For the information of the members of the Church, the First Presidency has issued the following statistical report concerning the growth and status of the Church as of 31 December 1985. (Membership figures include estimates based on 1985 reports available prior to conference.)

Church Units

Number of stakes	1,582
Number of districts	352
Number of missions	188
Number of wards	10,168
Number of branches	
in stakes	2,766
Number of branches	
in missions	2,071
Number of sovereign countries	
with organized wards	
or branches	95
Number of territories, colonies,	
and possessions with organized	
wards or branches	20

(These statistics reflect an increase of 75 stakes and 542 wards and branches during 1985.)

Church Membership

Total membership at the close
of 1985 5,920,000

Church Growth during 1985

Increase in children	
of record	95,000
Children of record	
baptized	70,000
Converts baptized	197,640

Priesthood

Deacons	248,000
Teachers	186,000
Priests	375,000
Elders	481,000
Seventies	33,000
High Priests	208,000

Missionaries

Full-time Missionaries	29,265
------------------------	--------

Genealogical Data

Names cleared in 1985 for temple
endowments 10,552,130

Temples

Number of endowments performed
during 1985:
For the living 54,554
For the dead 4,857,052
Temples in operation 37
Temples planned or under
construction 10
Temples closed during the year
for renovation 1
Five temples were dedicated and one
rededicated in 1985.

Church Educational System

Total enrollment during 1984-85
school year:
Seminaries and Institutes, including
special programs 349,827
Church schools and
colleges 45,558
Continuing education 366,257

Welfare Services

Persons assisted by LDS Social
Services 82,804
Persons placed in gainful
employment 34,552

Man-days of labor donated to
Welfare Services 244,766
Bishop's orders from
storehouses 344,562

**Prominent Members Who Have
Passed Away Since Last April**

President Spencer W. Kimball, twelfth President of the Church, at age ninety, on November 5, 1985; Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles; Norma P. Anderson, wife of Elder Joseph Anderson; Dorothy C. Stone, wife of Elder O. Leslie Stone; and Richard P. Condie, director of the Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir for seventeen years.

President Monson

Thank you, Brother Edling and Brother Watson.

It will now be our opportunity to hear from Elder James E. Faust, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. He will be our first speaker, and he will be followed by Bishop Glenn L. Pace, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric.

Elder James E. Faust**Care for poor and needy, and
become self-reliant**

I wish to speak of the basic principles that keep our feet on the ground economically. This is important to our happiness. Let us examine ourselves and, like pilots in the sky, take our bearings to see if we are on course financially. We must build upon sound principles. The bedrock principle of which I speak is that the responsibility for welfare rests with me and my family. In 1936 the First Presidency said in a great statement of purpose, "The aim of the Church is to help the people to

help themselves" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1936, p. 3).

Some of us are children of the Great Depression in the United States over fifty years ago. Most of us who passed through that period will never forget the difficult economic times almost everyone experienced. At that time many banks failed; people lost their life's savings; a great many were unemployed, and some of them lost their homes because they could not pay the mortgage. Many went hungry. If we didn't eat our oatmeal cereal for breakfast, we would often have it fried for lunch or dinner. Such widespread

economic problems could come again. But any of us, at any time, could meet with a personal calamity, such as sickness or an accident, which could limit or destroy our income.

The purpose of the welfare program is to care for the poor and the needy and make the members of the Church, by their obedience to gospel principles, strong and self-reliant. At the center of caring for the poor and the needy in a worldwide church is a generous contribution to the fast offerings, and personal and family preparedness. At the very heart of taking care of our own needs is our own energy and ability, with help to and from our own families.

I should like to discuss five prescriptions which, if followed, will make each of us better able to control our destinies.

First prescription: Practice thrift and frugality

There is a wise old saying: "Eat it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without." Thrift is a practice of not wasting anything. Some people are able to get by because of the absence of expense. They have their shoes resoled, they patch, they mend, they sew, and they save money. They avoid installment buying, and make purchases only after saving enough to pay cash, thus avoiding interest charges. *Frugality* means to practice careful economy. (See *Webster's New World Dictionary*, 2d. college edition.)

The old couplet "Waste not, want not" still has much merit. Frugality requires that we live within our income and save a little for a rainy day, which always seems to come. It means avoiding debt and carefully limiting credit purchasing. It is important to learn to distinguish between wants and needs. It takes self-discipline to avoid the "buy now, pay later" philosophy and to adopt the "save now and buy later" practice.

There are some investment counselors who urge speculative credit prac-

tices described as "leverage," "credit wealth," and "borrow yourself rich." Such practices may work successfully for some, but at best they succeed only for a time. An economic reversal always seems to come, and many who have followed such practices find themselves in financial ruin and their lives in shambles.

Elder Ezra Taft Benson stated: "A large proportion of families with personal debt have no liquid assets whatsoever to fall back upon. What troubles they invite if their income should be suddenly cut off or seriously reduced! We all know of families who have obligated themselves for more than they could pay" (*Pay Thy Debt, and Live*, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year [Provo, 28 Feb. 1963], p. 10).

Owning a home free of debt is an important goal of provident living, although it may not be a realistic possibility for some. A mortgage on a home leaves a family unprotected against severe financial storms. Homes that are free and clear of mortgages and liens cannot be foreclosed on. When there are good financial times, it is the most opportune time to retire our debts and pay installments in advance. It is a truth that "the borrower is servant to the lender" (Proverbs 22:7).

Many young people have become so hypnotized by the rhythm of monthly payments they scarcely think of the total cost of what they buy. They immediately want things it took their parents years to acquire. It is not the pathway to happiness to assume debts for a big home, an expensive car, or the most stylish clothes just so we can "keep up with the Joneses." Payment of obligations is a sacred trust. Most of us will never be rich, but we can feel greatly unburdened when we are debt-free.

Second prescription: Seek to be independent

The Lord said that it is important for the Church to "stand independent

above all other creatures beneath the celestial world" (D&C 78:14). Members of the Church are also counseled to be independent. Independence means many things. It means being free of drugs that addict, habits that bind, and diseases that curse. It also means being free of personal debt and of the interest and carrying charges required by debt the world over.

President J. Reuben Clark's classic statement on interest bears repeating:

"Interest never sleeps nor sickens nor dies; it never goes to the hospital; it works on Sundays and holidays; it never takes a vacation; it never visits nor travels; it takes no pleasure; it is never laid off work nor discharged from employment; it never works on reduced hours; it never has short crops nor droughts; it never pays taxes; it buys no food; it wears no clothes; it is unhoused and without home and so has no repairs, no replacements, no shingling, plumbing, painting, or whitewashing; it has neither wife, children, father, mother, nor kinfolk to watch over and care for; it has no expense of living; it has neither weddings nor births nor deaths; it has no love, no sympathy; it is as hard and soulless as a granite cliff. Once in debt, interest is your companion every minute of the day and night; you cannot shun it or slip away from it; you cannot dismiss it; it yields neither to entreaties, demands, or orders; and whenever you get in its way or cross its course or fail to meet its demands, it crushes you" (in Conference Report, Apr., 1938, p. 103).

Extended economic dependence humiliates a man if he is strong, and debilitates him if he is weak.

Payment of our tithes and offerings can help us become independent. President Nathan Eldon Tanner said: "Paying tithing is discharging a debt to the Lord. . . .

"If we obey this commandment, we are promised that we will 'prosper in the land.' This prosperity consists of more than material goods—it may include enjoying good health and vigor of

mind. It includes family solidarity and spiritual increase" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1979, p. 119; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, p. 81).

It is my firm belief, after many years of close observation, that those who honestly pay their tithes and offerings do prosper and get along better in almost every way. It is my testimony that in discharging this debt to the Lord, one enjoys great personal satisfaction. Unfortunately this great satisfaction will be known only by those who have the faith and strength to keep this commandment.

Third prescription: Be industrious

To be industrious involves energetically managing our circumstances to our advantage. It also means to be enterprising and to take advantage of opportunities. Industry requires resourcefulness. A good idea can be worth years of struggle.

A friend who owned some fertile fields complained to his sister about his lack of means. "What about your crops?" asked the sister. The impoverished man replied, "There was so little snow in the mountains, I thought there would be a drought, so I did not plant." As it turned out, unforeseen spring rains made the crops bountiful for those industrious enough to plant. It is a denial of the divinity within us to doubt our potential and our possibilities.

The great poet Virgil said, "They conquer who believe they can" (*International Dictionary of Thoughts*, comp. John P. Bradley, Leo F. Daniels, Thomas C. Jones [Chicago: J.C. Ferguson Publishing Co., 1969], p. 661). Alma testified, speaking of a just God, "I know that he granteth unto men according to their desire" (Alma 29:4).

To be industrious involves work. It involves creativity. It also involves rest. It includes both aspects of Sabbath day observance. On the one hand, we are to labor six days. On the other hand, we are to rest one day. This rest will leave us with more energy and re-

sources to make the rest of the week more productive and fruitful.

Fourth prescription: Become self-reliant

I have always admired those who have the ability and skills to make things with their hands. When those skills were passed out in the previous world, I must have been out to lunch. The ability to make repairs around the home, to improvise, to take care of our own machinery, to keep our automobiles running, is not only an economic advantage, but it also provides much emotional resilience.

President Spencer W. Kimball counseled: "I hope that we understand that, while having a garden, for instance, is often useful in reducing food costs and making available delicious fresh fruits and vegetables, it does much more than this. Who can gauge the value of that special chat between daughter and Dad as they weed or water the garden? How do we evaluate the good that comes from the obvious lessons of planting, cultivating, and the eternal law of the harvest? And how do we measure the family togetherness and cooperating that must accompany successful canning? Yes, we are laying up resources in store, but perhaps the greater good is contained in the lessons of life we learn as we live providently and extend to our children their pioneer heritage" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1977, p. 125; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, p. 78). This heritage includes teaching our children how to work.

Fifth prescription: Strive to have a year's supply of food and clothing

The counsel to have a year's supply of basic food, clothing, and commodities was given fifty years ago and has been repeated many times since. Every father and mother are the family's storekeepers. They should store whatever their own family would like to have in the case of an emergency. Most of us cannot afford to store a

year's supply of luxury items, but find it more practical to store staples that might keep us from starving in case of emergency. Surely we all hope that the hour of need will never come. Some have said, "We have followed this counsel in the past and have never had need to use our year's supply, so we have difficulty keeping this in mind as a major priority." Perhaps following this counsel could be the reason why they have not needed to use their reserve. By continued rotation of the supply it can be kept usable with no waste.

The Church cannot be expected to provide for every one of its millions of members in case of public or personal disaster. It is therefore necessary that each home and family do what they can to assume the responsibility for their own hour of need. If we do not have the resources to acquire a year's supply, then we can strive to begin with having one month's supply. I believe if we are provident and wise in the management of our personal and family affairs and are faithful, God will sustain us through our trials. He has revealed: "For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare; yea, I prepared all things, and have given unto the children of men to be agents unto themselves" (D&C 104:17).

Much of our own well-being is bound up in caring for others. Good King Benjamin, speaking through the pages of the Book of Mormon, counsels, "I would that ye should impart of your substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally, according to their wants" (Mosiah 4:26).

A lamp to light the way

You may ask, "How can I discern which of the prophetic utterances of this conference have a particular message for me?" My answer is, you can know. You can know by the whisperings of the Holy Spirit if you righ-

teously and earnestly seek to know. Your own inspiration will be an unerring vibration through the companionship of the Holy Ghost. As the Lord spoke to Elijah, this will come, not in the great strong wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in a still, small voice. (See 1 Kings 19:11-12.) This will help us, if necessary, to make the required change in our lives and life-styles to get onto a sure course.

The parable of the ten virgins, five wise and five foolish, has both a spiritual and a temporal application. Each of us has a lamp to light the way, but it requires that every one of us put the oil in our own lamps to produce that light. It is not enough to sit idly by and say, "The Lord will provide." He has prom-

ised that they who are wise and "have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide" will have the earth given unto them (D&C 45:57-58). It is further promised that "the Lord shall be in their midst, and his glory shall be upon them, and he will be their king and their lawgiver" (D&C 45:59). May it ever be so I pray humbly in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder James E. Faust, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Bishop Glenn L. Pace, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric.

Bishop Glenn L. Pace

Meetings with President Marion G. Romney

Five years ago I was asked to be the managing director of the Welfare Services Department of the Church. Within a few days I received a phone call from President Marion G. Romney. He said, "Brother Pace, do you know anything about welfare?"

Under the circumstances, this was a sobering question, and I responded, "President, I'm sure I have much to learn."

He asked me to set aside 3:00 P.M. each Friday for a meeting with him in which we could discuss welfare principles.

When I arrived at his office on the first Friday, President Romney's secretary went into his office and announced, "Glenn Pace is here, President."

He replied, "Oh yes, I'd like to see him, if he doesn't stay too long."

On my second visit, with "if he doesn't stay too long" still ringing in my ears, I covered two items and then started shuffling my feet and papers, subtly signaling I was ready to leave.

President Romney leaned across his desk with that twinkle in his eye and with a chuckle in his voice said, "Brother Pace, am I getting the impression you think you have something better to do?"

Purpose of welfare program

How I cherish those precious sessions spent with a man who has dedicated fifty years of service to the kingdom, especially in the area of welfare. He helped me to know President Harold B. Lee, President J. Reuben Clark, and other great leaders who emphasized the principles of welfare. I was counseled to measure all recommendations by the stated purpose of the welfare program as given by President Heber J. Grant in 1936.

President Romney would quote it from memory: "Our primary purpose was to set up, in so far as it might be possible, a system under which the curse of idleness would be done away with, the evils of a dole abolished, and independence, industry, thrift and self respect be once more established amongst our people. The aim of the

Church is to help the people to help themselves" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1936, p. 3).

Seek after the poor

Many times President Romney emphasized that the notion of the welfare program beginning in 1936 was a myth. He quoted President Lee, who said: "There wasn't any beginning to the welfare program. There isn't any ending of the welfare program, we are always in the middle of it. No endings, no beginnings, only middles" ("Listen and Obey," Welfare Agricultural Meeting, 3 Apr. 1971).

He quoted scriptures relating to the commandment to seek after the poor—scriptures given to the Saints in Kirtland, Ohio, and Jackson County, Missouri, at a time when almost all members were poor. He pointed out what was done relative to keeping these commands in Nauvoo in the 1840s and in the West in the late 1800s and in the early 1900s. He quoted Book of Mormon passages and used the New Testament to emphasize how much of the Savior's time was spent helping the poor and needy.

He made the process sound so simple. "Brother Pace, don't make things so complicated! All we have been trying to do is make our people self-reliant, because the more self-reliant one is, the more able to serve he becomes, and the more he serves, the greater his sanctification."

Principles and objectives

Over the years, there have been numerous approaches taken with the common goal of helping people become self-reliant. The welfare plan unveiled to inspired leaders in 1936 has become famous and is held up as an enviable example by leaders of other religions as well as government officials in high places.

As great as the various programs of the Church are, they carry with them a potential danger. If we are not care-

ful, it is possible to get so wrapped up in the plan that we forget the principles. We can fall into the trap of mistaking traditions for principles and confusing programs with their objectives.

One Saturday morning I was on my way to fulfill an assignment on a welfare farm. We were to clean the weeds out of an irrigation ditch. My route took me past the home of an elderly widow in my ward, who was weeding her front yard. The temperature was already in the mid-eighties and she looked like she was near to having a sunstroke. For a fleeting moment I thought I should stop and lend a helping hand, but my conscience allowed me to drive on by because, after all, I had an assignment on the welfare farm. I wonder what would have happened if I had followed the spontaneous prompting of the Spirit and unleashed the genuine compassion I was feeling. I wonder what would have happened to her; I wonder what would have happened to me. But I couldn't do that because I hadn't been assigned. We need more spontaneous acts of compassionate service.

Principles and programs

In 1983 some major modifications were made to the welfare program being followed in the United States and Canada. In making the announcement, President [Gordon B.] Hinckley said, "Permit me to say at the outset that that which you will hear has been considered in depth in all of its implications by the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve. . . .

"We reaffirm the basic principles of the welfare program. There will be no departure from those foundation principles. We feel the need to emphasize with greater clarity the obligation for members of the Church to become more independent and self-reliant, to increase personal and family responsibility, to cultivate spiritual growth and to be more fully involved in Christian service" (Regional Representatives' seminar, 1 Apr. 1983).

Since these changes have been announced, some have asked if the Church is abandoning or de-emphasizing welfare. This question is common only to those who are having trouble distinguishing the difference between a principle and a program.

At the conclusion of a General Welfare Services Executive Committee meeting, where I felt I had waxed eloquent in discussing farms, trucks, silos, and canneries, President Romney invited me into his office for an unscheduled meeting. He asked one question, "Brother Pace, why is it we never discuss principles and doctrine anymore?"

I have not been the same since I heard that penetrating inquiry. From that time until my release as the managing director of Welfare Services three years later, I vowed to be more diligent in evaluating programs to see if they were still accomplishing their objective relative to principles.

Still true is President Lee's statement: "Nobody changes the principles and doctrines of the Church except the Lord by revelation. But methods change as the inspired direction comes to those who preside at a given time. . . . You may be sure that your brethren who preside are praying most earnestly, and we do not move until we have the assurance, so far as lies within our power, that what we do has the seal of divine approval" (*Ensign*, Jan. 1971, p. 10).

"Welfare program" in other countries

As I travel into various countries, I am often asked, "When are we going to get the welfare program in this country?" I have responded by asking if they have a Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price. I also ask if they have bishops or branch presidents, and if there are people with needs and people who can help. When they answer yes, I explain they already have all the ingredients

necessary to activate a welfare program in their country.

During a trip to South America a few years ago, I spoke with a stake president whose stake had experienced over 50 percent unemployment during the previous three years. I knew the stake had received less than \$200 from the Area office during that period. I asked him how the members had been able to survive without a large infusion of outside help. His answer was the families had helped each other—not just father, mother, sons, and daughters, but uncles, aunts, and cousins. When a cousin got a job, the money earned went to benefit everyone. In addition, ward members looked after each other and shared what they had, however so meager. With tears in his eyes he explained how close his stake members were to each other and to the Lord. Their spirituality had increased manyfold. Did they have the welfare program? Yes—and in its purest form.

Disposition to do good

I fear we have learned too much over the years about programs at the expense of insufficient understanding of principles. If we had learned more principles, priesthood leaders all over the world would be solving local problems with local resources without waiting for something to come from Church headquarters. Members would be helping each other without waiting for an assignment.

Programs blindly followed bring us to a *discipline* of doing good, but principles properly understood and practiced bring us to a *disposition* to do good.

I visited Ethiopia last year with Elder Ballard. We came home with vivid pictures of degradation and poverty etched indelibly in our minds. However, I am haunted more often with memories of the conditions under which some of our own members are living in other areas of the world. If every member could travel and observe

these conditions, our fast-offering donations would increase substantially.

Generosity and compassion of members

Moroni was prophesying of our day when he said: "Behold, I speak unto you as if ye were present, and yet ye are not. But behold, Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing. . . .

"For behold, ye do love money, and your substance, and your fine apparel, and the adorning of your churches, more than ye love the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted" (Mormon 8:35, 37).

I have great faith in the generosity and compassion of the membership of this church. Never has it been demonstrated more clearly than during the special fasts held in January and November of last year. Over ten million dollars were raised for people we don't even know. Our members respond when they are aware of a need. Brothers and sisters, that need has not passed. There is much to be done among our own members.

Create independence and self-reliance

Poverty is a relative term. It means something much different in one country than in another. There is no common solution or program for every situation. However, principles are universal. We cannot bring everyone to the same economic level. To do so would violate principles and foster dependence rather than independence. People living in each country have the primary responsibility for solving their own problems. They must sacrifice for each other because, as the Prophet Joseph Smith said, "A religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation" (*Lectures on Faith* 6:7).

Members of the Church everywhere should ask themselves not

"What can the Church do for me?" but "What can I do for myself, for the Church, and for my neighbors?"

The solutions to poverty are extremely complex, and the balance between too much aid and not enough is very elusive. Our compassion can lead to failure if we give aid without creating independence and self-reliance in the recipient.

Challenges of our generation

However, there is a state of human misery below which no Latter-day Saint should descend as long as others are living in abundance. Can some of us be content living affluent life-styles while others cannot afford the chlorine to purify their water? Can we ignore the most basic temporal needs of our brothers and sisters and profess belief in President Joseph F. Smith's statement that "a religion that has not the power to save people temporally . . . cannot be depended upon to save them spiritually"? (quoted in Albert E. Bowen, *The Church Welfare Plan*, Sunday School Gospel Doctrine course, 1946, p. 36).

In 1936 we had a depression in the United States. Based on principles, a program was designed to fit the circumstances. Today we are an international church, and in many countries, the Saints face problems far more serious than those. Using welfare principles, solutions can be found to the challenges of today and tomorrow. May the Lord bless President Marion G. Romney and those with whom he labored for bringing to us an understanding of welfare principles. May we be as successful in meeting the challenges of our generation as our predecessors were in meeting theirs, is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We have just listened to Bishop Glenn L. Pace, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric. The choir and congregation will now join in singing "I

Need Thee Every Hour," following which Elder Russell M. Nelson, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will address us.

The choir and congregation sang
 "I Need Thee Every Hour."

Elder Russell M. Nelson

Poor and needy always with us

Since my previous medical work took Sister Nelson and me to a number of developing nations, we have been exposed to many challenging scenes. In one country, so many people were sleeping in the streets and on sidewalks that we literally had to step over them as we walked. In another nation, our compassion was stretched almost to the breaking point as we yearned to help countless people in need. Young mothers with babies bundled on their backs begged for money while paddling their little sampan boats, which served both as their shelter and as their mode of transportation. And, oh, how our hearts ached for young men and women of another country who, one by one, were strapped as beasts of burden to wooden-wheeled carts heavily laden with weighty cargo. As far as our eyes could see, the endless caravan of vehicles continued, pulled by dint of human toil.

Although reasons vary according to time and place, the poor and the needy have nearly always been present. Regardless of cause, our Heavenly Father is concerned for them. They are all his children. He loves and cares for them.

Old Testament: Blessings to those who care for the poor

Lessons from the Old Testament remind us that when the Lord sent prophets to call Israel back from apostasy, in almost every instance, one of the first charges made was that the poor had been neglected.

Scriptures teach us that the poor—especially widows, orphans, and strangers—have long been the concern

of God and the godly. The poor have been especially favored by the law. Old Testament teachings authorized poor persons at harvest time to glean after the reapers. At fruit-picking time, what was left hanging on branches belonged to the poor. In the sabbatical seventh year, and in the jubilee fiftieth year, land was not planted nor tilled, and what grew of itself was free for the hungry.

To those who cared for the poor, blessings were promised. The Lord would deliver them in time of trouble. (See Psalm 41:1.) Truths were taught by these proverbs: "He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he" (Proverbs 14:21). "The righteous considereth the cause of the poor: but the wicked regardeth not to know it" (Proverbs 29:7).

New Testament: A binding obligation to care for the poor

During the Savior's earthly ministry, he reemphasized his timeless concern for the poor. Remember the reply the Lord gave to the question of the rich man: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell [all] that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me" (Matthew 19:21; see also Luke 18:22).

In one of the Master's precious parables, he illustrated this doctrine with the story of one who was hungry and was given meat, another who was thirsty and was given drink, and a stranger who was welcomed. The Lord related those as favors to him when he taught, "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40).

And when they were *not* ministered unto, he admonished, "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it *not* to one of the least of these, ye did it *not* to me" (Matthew 25:45; italics added).

Indeed, the Church in New Testament times also had a binding obligation to care for the poor. (See also Luke 14:12-14, 16:19-31; Acts 2:44-45, 4:32, 6:1-6, 11:27-30; Romans 15:26; Galatians 2:10; James 2:1-9.)

Book of Mormon: Obligation for poor

The Book of Mormon repeatedly declares this doctrine. From it we learn that care of the poor is an obligation that we take upon ourselves at the time of baptism. The prophet Alma so taught:

"Ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light;

"Yea, and [ye] are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, . . . even until death. . . .

"Serve him and keep his commandments" (Mosiah 18:8-10).

Every person so baptized who receives the gift of the Holy Ghost, which seals the ordinance, is under solemn covenant with the Lord to obey his commandments. *Caring for the poor is one of those commandments.* Surely, in Book of Mormon times, members of the Church had a sacred obligation to care for the poor. (See 2 Nephi 9:30; Mosiah 4:16-27; Alma 1:29-31, 32:2-6, 34:28; Helaman 4:11-12; Mormon 8:35-39.)

Doctrine and Covenants: Relief to the poor and needy

Few, if any, of the Lord's instructions are stated more often, or given greater emphasis, than the commandment to care for the poor and the needy. Our dispensation is no exception.

In December 1830, the very year in which The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized, the Lord declared that "the poor and the meek shall have the gospel preached unto them, and they shall be looking forth for the time of my coming, for it is nigh at hand" (D&C 35:15).

Bishops were designated and their duties defined: "They shall look to the poor and the needy, and administer to their relief that they shall not suffer" (D&C 38:35).

In 1831, the Lord said: "Remember the poor. . . . Inasmuch as ye impart of your substance unto the poor, ye will do it unto me" (D&C 42:30-31). A little later, he again declared, "Visit the poor and the needy and administer to their relief" (D&C 44:6). Later the same year, he warned: "Wo unto you rich men, that will not give your substance to the poor, for your riches will canker your souls" (D&C 56:16).

"In mine own way"

With these teachings throbbing in our ears, stated and restated in accounts to all people in all days of recorded scripture, let our thoughts return to the homeless, beggars in boats, human beasts of burden, and to multitudes stricken with poverty.

Is it possible to be faithful to our solemn obligation to care for the poor and needy, to lift them and to love them—worldwide?

Where shall we begin?

When?

How?

Hear the answer of Almighty God:

"I, the Lord, stretched out the heavens, and built the earth, my very handiwork; and all things therein are mine.

"And it is my purpose to provide for my saints, for all things are mine.

"But it must needs be done in mine own way; and behold this is the way that I, the Lord, have decreed to provide for my saints, that the poor shall be exalted, in that the rich are made low.

"For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare; yea, I prepared all things, and have given unto the children of men to be agents unto themselves.

"Therefore, if any man shall take of the abundance which I have made, and impart not his portion, according to the law of my gospel, unto the poor and the needy, he shall, with the wicked, lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment" (D&C 104:14-18).

The Lord's prescription

I repeat the Lord's prescription: "But it must needs be done *in mine own way*"! We begin where we are, now, and work according to his plan. His "own way" includes these principles:

"Women have claim on their husbands for their maintenance. . . . [And] all children have claim upon their parents. . . . And after that, they have claim upon the church, or . . . upon the Lord's storehouse, if their parents have not. . . . And the storehouse shall be kept by the consecrations of the church; and widows and orphans shall be provided for, as also the poor" (D&C 83:2, 4-6).

An important part of the Lord's storehouse is maintained as a year's supply, stored, where possible, in the homes of faithful families of the Church.

Now, some may ask, "What about those who are poor because they are idle and unwilling to work?" They should heed these words of warning:

"Thou shalt not be idle; for he that is idle shall not eat the bread nor wear the garments of the laborer" (D&C 42:42).

"Wo unto you poor men . . . who will not labor with your own hands!" (D&C 56:17).

Judgment of worthiness is made by the bishop, and ultimately by the Lord, as taught by Nephi: "With righteousness shall the Lord God judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth" (2 Nephi 30:9).

Ours is not to judge; ours is a covenantal obligation to care for the poor and the needy, to prepare for their re-joining when the Messiah shall come again. (See D&C 56:18-19.)

Reliance on self, then family, then the Church

The Lord's "own way" includes, first, reliance on self, then on the family. As parents care for their children, they, in turn, may reciprocate when parents become less able. Family pride promotes solicitude for each member, taking priority over other assistance.

If one's family can't help, the Lord's "own way" includes the Church organization. The bishop is assisted by priesthood quorums and good sisters of the Relief Society, organized to look "to the wants of the poor, searching after objects of charity and . . . administering to their wants" (*Handbook of the Relief Society*, 1931, pp. 22).

Members of priesthood quorums and groups have a duty to rehabilitate, spiritually and temporally, their erring or unfortunate brethren. While a bishop extends aid to one temporarily out of work, the quorum arranges for his employment until fully self-supporting again.

As individual members of the Church, you and I participate in the Lord's "own way." At least once a month, we fast and pray and contribute generous offerings to funds that enable bishops to disperse aid. This is part of the law of the gospel. Each of us truly can help the poor and the needy, now, and wherever they are. And we, too, will be blessed and protected from apostasy by so doing.

"We have so much!"

Limitations do exist. Measures of relief are at best temporary. Storehouses can provide only for some temporal needs. All people cannot be

brought to the same living standards. And all needed things cannot be achieved by goods or gold.

To care fully for the poor, we must help the poor to change. As they are taught and abide doctrines of Deity, spiritual strength will come that enlightens the mind and liberates the soul from the yoke of bondage. When people of the earth accept the gospel of Christ, their attitudes change. Their understanding and capabilities increase.

A poet sensed the great power of the Spirit of the Lord to lift an individual when he wrote:

The chief of all thy wondrous
works,
Supreme of all thy plan;
Thou hast put an upward reach
Within the heart of man.
(Author unknown)

That upward reach, drawn from a knowledge of divine doctrines, transforms souls! May I share an illustration with you? Once, Sister Nelson and I were invited to the humble home of Polynesian Saints who had relatively recently joined the Church. By walking carefully on wooden planks, we approached their house, built on wooden piles emerging from the floor of the sea. We climbed a ladder to enter their little one-room dwelling. As we were invited to be seated on freshly woven grass mats, we could peek through holes in the floor and view sea water below. That home was starkly devoid of furniture, except for a used sewing machine provided by sisters of the Relief Society. But the love and warmth of this special family were apparent as our visit continued.

"We would like to sing for you," the father said through an interpreter. He put one arm about his wife and the other about the children, as did his wife. Five little ones, dressed in newly sewn clothing, joined their parents in singing songs the father had composed.

Concluding, he said: "These songs express our feelings of deep gratitude. Before we joined the

Church, we had so little. Now we have so much!"

While wiping tears from our moistened cheeks, Sister Nelson and I looked at each other, comprehending that the gospel brings spiritual wealth which may bear little relation, at first, to tangible abundance. Conversely, people with plenty can be spiritually poor. Yet the Lord is concerned for them all!

In the Lord's "own way"

Missionary work throughout the world is part of his plan. It brings the light of the gospel to those who embrace the truth. Then, as Saints learn and obey the commandments of God, they will prosper. This promise has been recorded by prophets throughout time and in diverse places. (See Joshua 1:7; 1 Kings 2:3; 2 Chronicles 24:20, 31:21; Ezra 6:14; 1 Nephi 2:20, 4:14; 2 Nephi 1:9, 20, 4:4; Jarom 1:9; Omni 1:6; Mosiah 1:7, 2:22, 31; Alma 9:13, 36:1, 30, 37:13, 38:1, 48:15, 25.)

Working with a will, Saints gain a new appreciation of who they are and of their eternal worth. Righteousness, independence, thrift, industry, and self-reliance become personal goals. These qualities transform lives. In time, in the Lord's "own way," the poor will no longer be poor.

The Church of Jesus Christ has been restored to the earth. The power of God is among men. Angelic ministrants communicate to legal administrators once again. A living prophet, the everlasting priesthood, covenant people, and the Lord's "own way" are upon the earth to bless mankind, all races, in every clime—yes, all people, young and old, wealthy and poor, now and forever more. This I testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder Russell M. Nelson, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us. Prior to

his remarks we sang "I Need Thee Every Hour." Perhaps you would wish to know that that hymn was President Spencer W. Kimball's favorite hymn. It is a favorite hymn of President Ezra Taft Benson, and the hymn we most frequently sing, more than any other, in

the temple meetings of the General Authorities.

We shall now hear from Bishop Robert D. Hales, Presiding Bishop of the Church. He will be followed by Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Bishop Robert D. Hales

Welfare taught by prophets

My brothers and sisters, throughout the history of the world, the Lord has been concerned for the eternal welfare of the souls of his children. Over the past fifty years, inspired leaders have taught welfare principles to help us plan ahead for difficult times that may come in our lives. The Church has grown and is now spread over many countries throughout the world. But the strength of the Church and the Lord's real storehouse is in the homes and hearts of his people.

A few months ago, after returning home from an assignment abroad, I became very ill from an amoebic disorder. With pain, dehydration, fever, and total enervation, an important welfare lesson was learned—that one could suddenly be thrust into a condition of intense need. Experiences such as this help us to become more aware of the needs of others and to realize that many people throughout the world live with these problems every day.

During the past few months, I have read and pondered the scriptures as well as discourses on welfare given at general conferences over the past fifty years. The great teachings of priesthood welfare principles have been taught by many prophets who have gone before in this and other dispensations, and by living prophets here today. They give us direction for the conduct of our lives.

The following seven welfare principles are essential to our happiness and spiritual development:

1. The welfare plan is an integral part of the plan of salvation.

2. The scriptures provide the spiritual framework for the welfare plan.

3. The welfare plan builds faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. By living welfare principles, we can develop self-reliance.

5. The welfare plan builds love and compassion for our fellowmen.

6. The welfare plan sanctifies both the giver and the receiver.

7. The welfare plan builds a Zion people.

1. The welfare plan is an integral part of the plan of salvation

Some have become confused about what "welfare" really means. Some approaches to welfare in the world foster idleness, give subsidies with no labor required, create a burden of debt, and promote greediness—an appetite for things of this world rather than the riches of eternity.

Too often rich and poor alike shut their hearts to the divine attributes of love and compassion. The rich languish in their abundance and justify turning the poor away as "welfare cases." The poor are likewise entrapped, becoming dependent on others in a system destined to trample initiative, undermine family responsibility, foster divisiveness, and erect barriers to equity, opportunity, and fellowship.

The Lord rejects such welfare programs. His plan meets the needs of all, however abundant or modest their cir-

cumstances. His purpose is to provide for our eternal welfare. "The prime duty of help to the poor [in body and spirit] . . . is not [solely] to bring temporal relief to their needs, but salvation to their souls" (J. Reuben Clark, Jr., address given 9 July 1941, transcript, Church Historical Department).

We are also told that "the Lord in his great infinite goodness doth bless and prosper those who put their trust in him" (Helaman 12:1). However, it is the disposition of many men that when all things are done for them, they "harden their hearts, and do forget the Lord their God, and do trample under their feet the Holy One—yea, and this because of their ease, and their exceedingly great prosperity.

"And thus we see that except the Lord doth chasten his people with many afflictions, . . . they will not remember him" (Helaman 12:2–3).

It is a sobering thought that the purpose of having opposition in all things, trials and tribulations in our lives, commands a concern for the needy in order to humble us and draw us closer to the Lord our God and nearer to perfection.

2. The scriptures provide the spiritual framework for the welfare plan

Turn to the Book of Mormon index and glance at the references listed under the word *welfare*. You will see, and the Spirit will testify, that the Lord's welfare plan focuses first and foremost on the eternal well-being of His children. These scriptures indicate that—

- Nephi sought his brothers' *eternal welfare* (see 2 Nephi 1:25) and labored all his days for his people's welfare (see Jacob 1:10).

- Jacob was desirous for the *welfare of his people's souls* (see 2 Nephi 6:3) and was weighted down with anxiety for the welfare of the souls of the Nephites (see Jacob 2:3).

- In turn, the Nephites were filled with anguish for the *welfare of the souls* of the Lamanites. (See Mosiah 25:11.)

- The Church *met oft* to speak one with another concerning the *welfare of souls*. (See Moroni 6:5.)

Take special note of the repeated reference to the *welfare of souls*. This implies much more than just food, clothing, and shelter for temporal needs.

3. The welfare plan builds faith in the Lord Jesus Christ

It shares this position in common with other gospel activities. Temporal challenges humble us and become spiritual opportunities. Temporal challenges bring us to our knees in prayer, seeking heavenly guidance and assistance from the Lord as well as from our brothers and sisters.

As we persist in putting welfare principles to work, adding our strengths and resources to those possessed by others, we can overcome our adversities. Overcoming temporal obstacles demonstrates to us that nothing is too hard for the Lord. Our faith in Christ is confirmed.

4. By living welfare principles, we can develop self-reliance

The welfare program requires that we develop self-reliance and live providently. Provident living requires us to develop proper attitudes—a willingness to forego luxuries, to avoid excess, and to fully use what we have—learning to live within our means.

Unrestricted by programs and projects, bricks and mortar, the Lord's real storehouse is indeed in the homes and the hearts of His people. As the members of the Church follow the counsel to become self-reliant, they represent an immense pool of resources, knowledge, skills, and charity available to help one another. This storehouse, the Lord has said, is "for the poor of my

people, . . . to advance the cause, which ye have espoused, to the salvation of man, and to the glory of your Father who is in heaven" (D&C 78:3-4).

5. The welfare plan builds love and compassion for our fellowmen

As we live the principles of welfare, love and compassion will abound in our homes, in our worship, and in our service to others. Gone will be the lamentable practices of intemperance and abuse of wives and children. Abused children become abusive parents. It is everybody's responsibility to see that this cycle of abuse is stopped. It is hypocritical to talk of compassion to others while we are rude or abusive within our own families. Let us put our own homes in order, seeing that the spiritual and emotional needs of our families are met. Then no one will escape our empathy and concern—be they rich or poor; old or young; family, neighbors, or strangers within our reach.

There are many Christian acts of charity in our community that have come to my attention. There are many guardian angels in our communities who care for the transients with a hot meal and a warm place to sleep for an evening. There are many who take custody of orphans and homeless to share their quiet love and compassion. Alma (34:28) says if Saints turn away the needy, they are "as hypocrites who do deny the faith."

I know of a family who once a month holds a "provident living family council." With mother and father, the children determine how \$25 out of their budget—in addition to their tithes and offerings—will be distributed to an individual in need. Last month, \$25 went to a young child in the Primary Children's Medical Center. This is one way to teach compassion to children, especially as they visit the sick child in the hospital. (By the way, the children now want to save more money to give to the needy in next month's budget.) This

family does other charitable acts, too. They do not give money and feel that they have done their compassionate service.

One family made room in their small home for a neighbor family whose home was being repaired after a fire. They were giving not what was convenient for them, but rather what was *needed* by the neighbor.

Another family invited their eighteen-year-old son's friend who needed a home to stay with them for a year while he prepared for a mission. They provided an environment of emotional support and spiritual example and enabled him to earn his own money for his mission. On his mission he grew in maturity, self-esteem, and confidence. Since his mission, with self-reliance, he has gone forward to strengthen others.

Financial need is an important part of welfare, but there are other equally important essential elements that, through love and compassion, build self-reliance—emotionally and physically—helping one to be useful and productive and to be a help.

6. The welfare plan sanctifies both the giver and the receiver

We are all both givers and receivers. President Marion G. Romney has said, "There is an interdependence between those who have and those who have not. The process of giving exalts the poor and humbles the rich. In the process, both are sanctified" (*Ensign*, Nov. 1982, p. 93).

No one is exempt from giving to the impoverished. The counsel is: "And again, I say unto the poor . . . I mean all you who deny the beggar, because ye have not; I would that ye say in your hearts that: *I give not because I have not, but if I had I would give*" (Mosiah 4:24; italics added).

No one is exempt from receiving. To the rich, the reality is: "For behold, are we not all beggars? Do we not all depend upon the same Being, even God, . . . calling on his name, and

begging for a remission of [our] sins" through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ? (Mosiah 4:19–20).

7. The welfare plan builds a Zion people

Zion is characterized in scripture as a city in which the people "were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them" (Moses 7:18). Zion is "every man seeking the interest of his neighbor, and doing all things with an eye single to the glory of God" (D&C 82:19). This promised Zion always seems to be a little beyond our reach. We need to understand that as much virtue can be gained in progressing toward Zion as in dwelling there. It is a process as well as a destination. We approach or withdraw from Zion through the manner in which we conduct our daily dealings, how we live within our families, whether we pay an honest tithe and generous fast offering, how we seize opportunities to serve and do so diligently. Many are perfected upon the road to Zion who will never see the city in mortality.

So, my brothers and sisters, when we think of welfare, let us think of the plan revealed by our Lord for the eternal welfare of our souls. It is a plan to build faith, love, compassion, self-reliance, and unity. When adapted to local needs throughout the world by vigorous priesthood leaders, the plan sanctifies both givers and receivers and prepares a Zion people.

With these basic welfare principles in mind, today we are being

asked to teach and practice the doctrine of work, self-reliance, provident living, giving, and caring for the poor; to increase our generous fast-offering donations to help those in need; to increase our compassionate service, involving the family in charitable acts of service to one another and to our neighbors.

I bear you my testimony that we live in a dispensation of time when there have been ministering angels. The angel Moroni was one such heavenly messenger. His visit was essential to the restoration of the gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith. But, Joseph Fielding Smith taught us that "it is contrary to the law of God for the heavens to be opened and messengers to come to do anything for man that man can do for himself" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 3 vols., comp. Bruce R. McConkie [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954–57], 1:196).

That you and I might realize that we have the power and responsibility to help those in need, as ministering angels for the Lord Jesus Christ, that we will be loved because we love, be consoled because we are compassionate, be forgiven because we have demonstrated the capacity to forgive, is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Thank you, Bishop Robert D. Hales, Presiding Bishop of the Church.

Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now be our concluding speaker.

Elder L. Tom Perry

Good and difficult times

The great lessons of the scriptures teach us over and over again how foolish it is for mankind to desert the ways of the Lord and rely on the arm of flesh. One of the certainties of life is that

mankind, individually and collectively, will cycle through their mortal experience with periods of good and difficult times. How many of our family histories contain paragraphs similar to this?

"Economically, our family had its ups and downs. Like many Americans, we did well during the 1920s. My father started making lots of money in real estate, in addition to his other businesses. For a few years we were actually wealthy. But then came the Depression.

"No one who's lived through it can ever forget. My father lost all his money, and we almost lost our house. I remember asking my sister, who was a couple of years older, whether we'd have to move out and how we'd find somewhere else to live. I was only six or seven at the time, but the anxiety I felt about the future is still vivid in my mind. Bad times are indelible—they stay with you forever" (Lee Iacocca and William Novak, *Iacocca: An Autobiography* [New York: Bantam Books, 1984], p. 7).

But as surely as we can rely on change being a part of life, there is also the absolute assurance that we are children of an eternal Father in Heaven. As the supreme example of a kind and loving father, He has charted a well-defined course for His children to follow, the destination of which is the blessing of returning to His presence.

The law of the fast

He has marked the path with true principles, which will stand the test of time. In this session of general conference this afternoon, we have been reviewing welfare principles as they have been revealed to us for our application over the last fifty years.

There is one additional principle basic to this whole welfare plan which I would like to discuss with you this afternoon. It is the law of the fast. I always marvel as I study the principles the Lord has designed for us to follow—how simple they are in concept, how easy they are to administer, and how compliance always brings forth additional blessings.

The law of the fast is basic in the Church. Isaiah declared:

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen? . . .

"Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry?" (Isaiah 58:6-7).

Like many other biblical practices, it was restored by the Lord in our day through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

The law of the fast has three great purposes. First, it provides assistance to the needy through the contribution of fast offerings, consisting of the value of meals from which we abstain. Second, a fast is beneficial to us physically. Third, it is to increase humility and spirituality on the part of each individual.

First purpose: Contributions to assist needy

An important reason for fasting is to contribute the amount saved from the meals not eaten to care for the poor and the needy. One of the strongest admonitions the Lord has given to His children on earth is that we have the responsibility and obligation of caring for those in need. It was King Benjamin who said in his great address, "And now, for the sake of these things which I have spoken unto you—that is, for the sake of retaining a remission of your sins from day to day, that ye may walk guiltless before God—I would that ye should impart of your substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally, according to their wants" (Mosiah 4:26).

Do we need to be reminded that included in our baptismal covenant is our pledge to bear one another's burdens that they may be light, to mourn with those that mourn, and to comfort those that stand in need of comfort? (See Mosiah 18:8-9.)

The Lord's system

The longer I live, the more impressed I am with the Lord's system of

caring for the poor and needy. Surely no man would think of such a simple yet profound way of satisfying human needs—to grow spiritually and temporally through periodic fasting and then donating the amount saved from refraining from partaking of those meals to the bishop to be used to administer to the needs of the poor, the ill, the down-trodden, who need help and support to make their way through life.

It was President [J. Reuben] Clark who said: "The fundamental principle of all Church relief work is that it must be carried on by fast offerings and other voluntary donations and contributions. This is the order established by the Lord. Tithing is not primarily designed for that purpose and must not be used except in the last extremity" (quoted in Marion G. Romney, "Our Primary Purpose," address delivered in Welfare Agricultural Meeting, 3 Apr. 1971, p. 1).

Throughout religious history we have found how the Lord blesses the people when they reach out and care for the poor and the needy. Of the days of Hezekiah we read this in the scriptures:

"And concerning the children of Israel and Judah, . . . they also brought in the tithe of oxen and sheep, and the tithe of holy things which were consecrated unto the Lord their God, and laid them by heaps.

"And when Hezekiah and the princes came and saw the heaps, they blessed the Lord, and his people Israel.

"Then Hezekiah questioned with the priests and the Levites concerning the heaps" (2 Chronicles 31:6, 8-9).

The answer was, "Since the people began to bring the offerings into the house of the Lord, we have had enough to eat, and have left plenty: for the Lord hath blessed his people; and that which is left is this great store" (2 Chronicles 31:10).

We have said a lot today about President Romney and what he has declared about the welfare program. Could I add another statement:

"I am thoroughly in harmony with what the Bishop said about our need to

contribute liberally to the fast-offerings fund and to every other fund that the Church officially calls upon us to contribute to. I am a firm believer that you cannot give to the Church and to the building up of the kingdom of God and be any poorer financially. I remember a long time ago, over 50 years, when Brother [Melvin J.] Ballard laid his hands on my head and set me apart to go on a mission. He said in that prayer of blessing that a person could not give a crust to the Lord without receiving a loaf in return. That's been my experience. If the members of the Church would double their fast-offering contributions, the spirituality in the Church would double. We need to keep that in mind and be liberal in our contributions" (Welfare Agricultural Meeting, 3 Apr. 1971, p. 1).

With all these promises of the Lord over the expanse of man's sojourn on earth, how shocking it is to find that sometimes it is necessary to use tithing funds of the Church to make up for deficits in our fast-offering contributions. Oh, where is our faith? Oh, how we deprive ourselves of the blessings of the Lord by not being generous in our fast-offering contributions.

Let us have the faith to bind the Lord to bless this people because we are following His order to care for the poor and the needy among us by being generous in our fast-offering contributions.

Second purpose: Fasting beneficial to us physically

Fasting is also beneficial to us physically. Some time ago I read an article in *Science News* written by Charles L. Goodrich, which stated that the advantages of modern eating habits extend far beyond the cosmetic. Numerous animal studies have demonstrated that caloric restriction early in life leads to an increased life span and reduces the risk of certain diseases.

There is also evidence of health-promoting effects of periodic fasting. Some experiments have shown that periodic fasting not only promotes a lon-

ger life, but encourages a more vigorous activity later in life. (See *Science News*, 1 Dec. 1979, p. 375.)

Fasting is also one of the finest ways of developing our own discipline and self-control. Plato said, "The first and the best victory is to conquer self; to be conquered by self is, of all things, the most shameful and vile" (*Laws*, Book 1, section 626E).

Fasting helps to teach us self-mastery. It helps us to gain the discipline we need to have control over ourselves.

Again we can conclude that if we are wise in following the Lord's law of the fast, we too will receive benefits, physically.

Third purpose: Increase humility and spirituality

Finally, let us examine the humility and spiritual strength derived from fasting. The Savior certainly recognized the need for this principle, for after His baptism we find the scriptures recording:

"And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

"Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered" (Luke 4:1-2).

And the devil used all his cunning ways to tempt the Savior to abandon His mission. To this the Savior responded: "Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

"And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.

"And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about" (Luke 4:8, 13-14).

Fasting had blessed Him with the power of the Spirit.

There is also the account in the Book of Mormon of Alma as he trav-

eled southward on his way to Manti. He was astonished to meet his friends, the sons of Mosiah, journeying toward the land of Zarahemla. It was a joyous meeting as they exchanged accounts of their missionary journeys. Alma was delighted to see how the sons of Mosiah had waxed strong in the knowledge of the truth. The scripture records:

"But this is not all; they had given themselves to much prayer, and fasting; therefore they had the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation, and when they taught, they taught with power and authority of God.

"And they had been teaching the word of God for the space of fourteen years among the Lamanites, having had much success in bringing many to the knowledge of the truth; yea, by the power of their words many were brought before the altar of God, to call on his name and confess their sins before him" (Alma 17:3-4).

These are only two examples of the many we can find in the scriptures where fasting and prayer for a purpose bring forth a special spiritual power. This same blessing is available to each of us if we will only take advantage of it.

Testimony of this inspired program

I would like to add my testimony this afternoon to the others who have given witness to the blessings of those who have given to and received from this great, inspired welfare services program over the last fifty years. My father was the bishop of our ward at the time of its announcement to the Church in April general conference of 1936. The world was struggling in the Great Depression. So many of the fathers of our ward were unemployed. In those days a dime for admission to a school activity would prevent many of my friends from attending because their parents could not afford even that small amount for their children's enjoyment.

Because of my father's calling as a bishop, I was able to gain an apprecia-

tion of the welfare program from its very beginning as I watched him administer to the needs of the poor in his ward with great love and tenderness. How often I raced home from school anticipating a planned activity. As I would round the corner of our home, there I would see sacks of flour, sugar, and other commodities. My heart would fall, as I knew it would be another evening out with Father as he delivered these commodities to those in need. The planned activity would have to be cancelled for that evening.

When he arrived home, I was always enlisted to help him put the commodities in the car and travel with him to make the deliveries. Sometimes I would grumble under my breath for having been so put upon, but then I would have the remarkable experience of watching the light come back into the eyes of a depressed family as food was brought into their home. I always returned home from those experiences with an exhilarated feeling of watching the Church in action as it was caring for its poor and its needy through fast offerings and good, kind priesthood leaders.

May the Lord continue to bless us with the faith to follow the inspired leadership He has provided for us here on earth that we may fulfill our obligations and responsibilities and be blessed by His hand, both spiritually and temporally, as we follow His plan, is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has been our concluding speaker. As you may have guessed, all of the speakers this afternoon are members of the Welfare Executive Committee of the Church. As the chairman of that committee I am very proud of them.

We remind the brethren of the general priesthood meeting which will convene here at the Tabernacle this evening at 6:00 P.M.

The nationwide CBS Radio Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Those desiring to attend this broadcast must be in their seats no later than 9:15 A.M.

The singing for this session has been furnished by the combined institute choir from Utah Technical College, LDS Business College, University of Utah, Weber State College, and Utah State University. We are grateful for the presence of these young people and for the inspiration their music has added to this meeting.

The choir will now sing in closing "I Know That My Redeemer Lives." Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder Devere Harris, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "I Know That My Redeemer Lives."

Elder Devere Harris offered the benediction.

GENERAL PRIESTHOOD MEETING

THIRD SESSION

The general priesthood meeting convened in the Tabernacle at 6:00 P.M. on Saturday, April 5, 1986.

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music for this session was provided by a returned missionary choir from Brigham Young University

directed by Stephen Bardsley with John Longhurst at the organ.

President Monson opened this session with the following remarks:

President Thomas S. Monson

Brethren, President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked me to conduct this session. The Tabernacle is filled to overflowing—a beautiful sight. The congregations throughout the world would comprise also a beautiful sight.

We extend our love and best wishes to all of the brethren participating in this session.

These services are being relayed by closed-circuit and satellite transmission to members of the priesthood gathered in the Assembly Hall and in locations in many countries around the world.

We note that Elders Adney Y. Komatsu and Ronald E. Poelman are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall, and Elders Wm. Grant Bangerter and John H. Groberg are seated on the stand in the BYU Marriott Center.

The singing during this session will be furnished by a returned mission-

ary choir from Brigham Young University under the direction of Stephen Bardsley with John Longhurst at the organ.

We shall begin this service by the choir singing “God of Our Fathers, We Come unto Thee.” Following the singing, Elder Carlos E. Asay, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The choir sang “God of Our Fathers, We Come unto Thee.”

Elder Carlos E. Asay offered the invocation.

President Monson

Thank you, Brother Asay.

The choir will now favor us with “Lord, I Would Follow Thee.” Following the choir number, Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will speak to us.

The choir sang “Lord, I Would Follow Thee.”

Elder Neal A. Maxwell spoke without further announcement

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

“Called and prepared from the foundation of the world”

What if in tomorrow’s newspapers and on television scholars excitedly announced that dozens of pages of startling and significant writings, including those of Enoch, Abraham, and Moses, had been found? These startling writings inform us, among many important things, how the Lord tutored Moses, told him of other worlds, and then in regal response told Moses why God created and peopled this planet. (See Moses 1:4–6, 8, 10, 30, 37–39; Isaiah 45:18.) These writings indicate that Abraham and others were chosen in premortal councils, just like Jeremiah,

long before they were born. (See Abraham 3:23; Jeremiah 1:5.) Among this distinguished group was the thirteenth President-to-be of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, President Ezra Taft Benson. In fact, we learn that all faithful men of the priesthood were “called and prepared from the foundation of the world” (Alma 13:3), even though, by secular criteria, such are “the weak things of the earth” (D&C 133:59).

This new information about Enoch is eighteen times that which is in the Bible. Further, we learn from it that a human utopia was once actually achieved, as we receive a portrait of a

special people, the City of Enoch. (See Moses 7:17–19.)

These tremendous discoveries likewise show us that the gospel of Jesus Christ was taught and its ordinances administered in Adam's time, in the dawn of human history. (See Moses 5:58–59.) Furthermore, Adam gathered his righteous posterity together three years before his death. He instructed them, blessed them, and prophesied concerning the future. The Lord even appeared at this very special family gathering. (See D&C 107:53–57.)

Scriptural “finds”

Given such sobering and liberating discoveries, would not we and many others be deeply impressed and very attentive? Would there not be a stir much, much larger than that which has accompanied the finding of the Dead Sea Scrolls and other ancient writings? The secular world, of course, would pay only passing heed and would quickly return to the pressing cares of the world.

As you already know, these “finds” are but a portion of the abundant Restoration, reflecting the remarkable ministry of the Prophet Joseph Smith, through whom there was such an outpouring. Traversing these truths requires more than a casual stroll up sloping foothills; they take us instead up the breathtaking ridges of reality to an Everest of understanding. On a clear day, we can see forever!

The Bible, in our present format, totals just under sixteen hundred printed pages from multiple authors. To these have been added nearly nine hundred other printed pages of scripture through the Prophet Joseph Smith—more than from all the writings of Moses, Paul, Luke, and Mormon combined, as these are available today—illustrating the quantitative significance of what has come to us through the Restoration.

Confirmation of premortal existence

Cited in these brief remarks are only a few verses, the equivalent of only three or four printed pages in our current scriptures. But what enormous, qualitative significance is represented!

Before the Restoration, the void was very real. Prior to meeting Joseph Smith, Brigham Young said he would have crawled around the earth on his hands and knees to meet someone like Moses who could tell him anything “about God and heaven” (JD, 8:228). Through Joseph Smith we have additional pages from Moses about God and heaven. We have only to reach to the bookshelf or go to priesthood meeting. Perhaps the way is almost too easy and too simple; we might be more appreciative if on hands and knees. (See 1 Nephi 17:41.) Only by searching the scriptures, not using them occasionally as quote books, can we begin to understand the implications as well as the declarations of the gospel.

For instance, three verses from Alma, advising of premortal preparations and calls, officially broke centuries of silence about mankind's premortal existence. (See Alma 13:3–5.) In 1833, further confirmation came. Not only was Jesus “in the beginning with God,” but “man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be” (D&C 93:29).

We can thus sing “O My Father” (*Hymns*, 1985, no. 292) with real intent and assurances of real belonging.

The grand goal

In 1832, Jesus, who was seen on this rapturous occasion, was accompanied by a voice bearing record that Jesus had created this and other worlds, whose inhabitants are begotten sons and daughters unto God. (See D&C 76:23–24; John 1:3; Hebrews 1:2.)

Brethren, how can we truly understand who we are unless we know who we were and what we have the power to become? How can there be real identity without real history? How can one understand his tiny, individual plot without knowing, even a little, about Father's grand, galactic plans?

In 1833, information also came indicating that Jesus grew from "grace to grace" until He received a fulness. (See D&C 93:13.) This is so helpful, especially in view of how the Father and the Son have encouraged us, afresh, to become more like them by developing the requisite qualities in our lives. (See Matthew 5:48; 3 Nephi 12:48; 27:27.) What Jesus taught in His Sermon on the Mount about striving for this grand goal was said in earnest. Moreover, having been advised that we are to become childlike, we are firmly told of the specific attributes needed. (See Matthew 18:3; Mosiah 3:19; Alma 7:23; 13:28.)

In so striving, each man of the priesthood will love his wife and bless his children. He will be a true patriarch, having the authority of example as well as the authority of the holy priesthood.

Search, ponder, and live by these precious truths

We learn from terse verses that we are not helpless and hapless victims of "original sin." We are responsible for our own actual and individual sins, not Adam's, whom the Lord forgave long, long ago. (See Moses 6:53-54; D&C 93:38; Articles of Faith 1:2.) In fact, "because that Adam fell, we are" (Moses 6:48), and "men are, that they might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25).

Commanded to write of these truths, Moses was also told that many of the things he would write would later be taken away. Nevertheless, these would be "had again" among the children of men in the last days. (See Moses 1:40-41.)

My brethren, these truths are "had again." We possess these precious truths! Now they must come to possess

us! We are to search them, to ponder them, to feel them, and to live by them!

They are not just theological niceties and philosophical footnotes. We need to ponder their implications as well as believe in their declarations regarding daily and eternal life.

Chastening, patience, and divine purpose

One cannot have adequate faith in a Christ whom he does not adequately know, "who is a stranger . . . far from the thoughts and intents of his heart" (Mosiah 5:13). Instead, by laying aside "every weight" of the world and the sins which so "easily beset us," by looking unto Jesus and by feasting upon His words, we will be able to move forward with intellectual and spiritual vigor. Otherwise, as Paul said, we can become wearied and faint in our minds. (See Hebrews 12:1-3; see also 2 Nephi 31:20.) When we understand what was revealed to Adam—"[my] plan of salvation unto all men" (Moses 6:62)—then these doctrines are keenly relevant for tomorrow's trial, Tuesday's temptation, or next month's surge of self-pity. After all, chastening, the trial of our faith, and patience are part of the plan. (See Mosiah 23:21.)

It is all so wondrously Christ-centered. Whether in the structure of the atom or of the galaxies, or in the truths about temples and families, for those who have eyes to see, all things "from the beginning of the world" (2 Nephi 11:4) "bear record of [God]" (Moses 6:63). They are designed to point us to Christ, typifying Him, so that we might follow Him, have faith in Him, and keep His commandments.

If sought by faith (see Romans 9:30-32), these doctrines of the radiant restoration enclose us in divine purpose during our sojourn in this "far country." Like the prodigal son who "came to himself," we thus receive needed perspective and direction as we also begin to "arise and go to [our] Father." (See Luke 15:11-32.)

Glimpses of the City of God

The initial labor we have to perform with regard to these doctrines is only to look (see 1 Nephi 17:41), firmly averting our gaze from the comparative slums of the secular world, with its grabbiness and grubbiness.

The gospel, in fact, gives us glimpses of the far horizon, revealing a glow from the lights of the City of God. It is a place of happy countenances, where justice and mercy as well as righteousness and truth are constant companions. Herein gentleness and generosity prevail, "without compulsory means" (D&C 121:46). Coarseness and selfishness are unknown, belonging to a previous and primitive place. Here envy would be a sure embarrassment. Neighbors are esteemed as self. This city, where all the residents keep the first and second great commandments, is a community of striking individuals of one heart and of one mind.

We will not be strangers in the City of God. We were there before, when the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy at the prospects of this stern but necessary mortal existence. (See Job 38:4-7.) What we sang then was doubtless an anthem of praise far greater than the "Hallelujah Chorus," more glorious than Moses' and Israel's song after crossing the Red Sea. (See Exodus 15:1-2.)

Be added upon

Wonder is added to wonder as temples and scriptures tell us of still other worlds—of a universe drenched in divine design, with, as it were, spiritual "cousins" in the cosmos.

When we see things as they really were, really are, and really will be (see Jacob 4:13; D&C 93:24), dispensations are merely seasons, new friendships are but relationships resumed, and prophets sent forth on their errands from the Lord reflect associations

which arc across the ages as they later rendezvous on mountaintops and hills, in woods, fields, groves, and even jails. (See Moses 1:1-2; Matthew 17:1-7; Joseph Smith—History 1:14, 48-50; Acts 23:11.)

We are not now ready for all things the Lord has prepared in the City of God for them that love Him. (See 1 Corinthians 2:9.) Our present eyes are unready for things which they have not yet seen, and our ears are not prepared for the transcending sounds and music of that city.

The trek will be proving and trying. Faith, patience, and obedience are essential (see Mosiah 23:21; Abraham 3:25), but he who completes the journey successfully will be immeasurably added upon (see Abraham 3:26). And he who does not will have subtracted from the sum of his possibilities.

When we arrive home, we shall be weary and bruised. But at last our aching homesicknesses will cease. Meanwhile, our mortal homecomings are but faint foreshadowings of that Homecoming!

Called in the "there and then" for duties "here and now"

Brethren, these plain and precious doctrines restored in our time through the Prophet Joseph Smith are pulsating with perspective and are so light-intensive, like radioactive materials, that they must be handled with great care.

To life's great questions about identity and meaning come the Restoration's resounding answers. Accompanying these affirming "Yes, yeses!" are the guiding rules or necessary "No, noes!" These restored truths are not mysterious, but wondrous. These truths do not represent the gossip of the galaxies, but, instead, the universe's simple, stunning secrets—such as those God shared with Enoch, Abraham, Moses, and Joseph Smith—a few of which I have noted. Nothing could be more relevant, more resplendent, more true!

"Praise to the man who communed with Jehovah!" (see *Hymns*, 1985, no. 27). We are Joseph's spiritual heirs, called ages and ages ago—in the "there and then"—for the duties which await us "here and now!"

Duties as doers and messengers

Men and young men of the priesthood, let us be about those duties as doers and messengers. The gospel message is worthy of work like that performed by Ether, "from the morning, even until the going down of the sun" (Ether 12:3).

This work is worthy of sacrifice and courage like that of Abinadi. He suffered death by fire, saying that after "I finish my message," then "it matters not" (Mosiah 13:9).

Doctrinal illiteracy

Doers, said Jesus, will know that these doctrines are of God. (See John 7:17.) Therefore, do not be surprised when nondoers scoff. Do not be surprised, either, if these doctrines un-

settle some. Such was the case when the ancient Apostles filled Jerusalem with their doctrines. (See Acts 5:28.) And when Jesus focused His hearers on doctrines, "they were astonished at his doctrine" (Matthew 22:33). The only cure for the doctrinal illiteracy of those who murmur will be to learn doctrine. (See Isaiah 29:24.)

Given the grandness of the Restoration, "My heart is brim with joy" (Alma 26:11). I apologize for my inability to speak of Jesus as He deserves, being able to speak only "the smallest part which I feel" (Alma 26:16). Yet, even so, "There is music in my soul today, a carol to my King, and Jesus listening can hear, the songs I cannot sing" (*Hymns*, 1985, no. 227).

In the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us. President Benson has indicated that I should be your next speaker.

President Thomas S. Monson

"Be one"

Whenever I have the privilege to attend this, the general priesthood meeting of the Church, I reflect on the teachings of some of the most noble of God's leaders who have stood at this pulpit and who, from the brilliance of their minds, from the depths of their souls, and from the warmth of their hearts, have given us direction. President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., was such a man. Time and again, his fervent plea was for the priesthood of God to be united. Citing the teachings of Jesus, he inevitably admonished us, "Be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine" (D&C 38:27).

A treasured truth! A profound philosophy!

It was my great privilege to know President Clark rather well. I was his printer. On occasion, he would share with me some of his most intimate thoughts, even those scriptures around which he tailored his teachings and lived his life. Late one evening I delivered some press proofs to his office situated in his home at 80 D Street here in Salt Lake City. President Clark was reading from Ecclesiastes. He was in a quiet and reflective mood. He sat back from his large desk, which was stacked with books and papers. He held the scriptures in his hand, lifted his eyes

from the printed page, and read aloud to me: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). He exclaimed, "A treasured truth! A profound philosophy!" Through the years that conversation has remained bright in my memory. I love, I cherish the noble word *duty*.

The legendary General Robert E. Lee of American Civil War fame declared, "Duty is the sublimest word in our language. . . . You cannot do more. You should never wish to do less."

From that same hour of history, as Abraham Lincoln left the people of Springfield to take over the nation's presidency, he said, "Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it" (address, Cooper Union, New York, 27 Feb. 1860).

The call of duty

Time marches on. Duty keeps cadence with that march. Duty does not dim nor diminish. Catastrophic conflicts come and go, but the war waged for the souls of men continues without abatement. Like a clarion call comes the word of the Lord to you, to me, and to priesthood holders everywhere: "Wherefore, now let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence" (D&C 107:99).

The call of duty came to Adam, to Noah, to Abraham, to Moses, to Samuel, to David. It came to the Prophet Joseph Smith and to each of his successors, even to President Ezra Taft Benson. The call of duty came to the boy Nephi. Listen to his words:

"And it came to pass that I, Nephi, returned from speaking with the Lord, to the tent of my father.

"And it came to pass that he spake unto me, saying: Behold I have dreamed a dream, in the which the Lord hath commanded me that thou and thy brethren shall return to Jerusalem.

"For behold, Laban hath the record of the Jews and also a genealogy of thy forefathers, and they are engraven upon plates of brass.

"Wherefore, the Lord hath commanded me that thou and thy brothers should go unto the house of Laban, and seek the records, and bring them down hither into the wilderness.

"And now, behold thy brothers murmur, saying it is a hard thing which I have required of them; but behold I have not required it of them, but it is a commandment of the Lord.

"Therefore go, my son, and thou shalt be favored of the Lord, because thou has not murmured.

"And it came to pass that I, Nephi, said unto my father: I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them" (1 Nephi 3:1-7).

Magnify your calling

When that same call comes to you and to me, what will be our response? Will we murmur, as did Laman and Lemuel, and say, "This is a hard thing required of us"? Or will we, with Nephi, individually declare, "I will go. I will do"?

Oftimes the wisdom of God appears as foolishness to men, but the greatest single lesson we can learn in mortality is that, when God speaks and a man obeys, man will always be right.

President John Taylor cautioned us, "If you do not magnify your calling, God will hold you responsible for those you might have saved, had you done your duty."

The call of duty came to John E. Page when the Prophet Joseph Smith extended to him a call to serve as a missionary. John E. Page "murmured" and responded, "Brother Joseph, I can't go on a mission to Canada. I don't even have a coat to wear."

The Prophet Joseph removed his own coat, handed it to Brother Page, and said, "Here, take this and the Lord will bless you." John E. Page went on that mission to Canada and, during a two-year period, walked five thousand miles and baptized six hundred people. (See Andrew Jensen, "John E. Page," *The Historical Record*, 5:57.)

A famed minister observed, "Men will work hard for money. Men will work harder for other men. But men will work hardest of all when they are dedicated to a cause. Until willingness overflows obligation, men fight as conscripts rather than following the flag as patriots. Duty is never worthily performed until it is performed by one who would gladly do more, if only he could."

I slept and dreamt
That life was joy.
I awoke and saw
That life was duty.
I acted, and behold—
Duty was joy.
(Rabindranath Tagore)

Robert Louis Stevenson reminded us: "I know what pleasure is, for I have done good work."

The call of duty can come quietly as we who hold the priesthood respond to the assignments we receive. President George Albert Smith, that modest yet effective leader, declared, "It is your duty first of all to learn what the Lord wants and then by the power and strength of your holy priesthood to so magnify your calling in the presence of your fellows that the people will be glad to follow you" (*Church News*, 7 Sept. 1968, p. 15).

What does it mean to magnify a calling? It means to build it up in dignity and importance, to make it honorable and commendable in the eyes of all men, to enlarge and strengthen it, to let the light of heaven shine through it to the view of other men. And how does one magnify a calling? Simply by performing the service that pertains to it. An elder magnifies the ordained calling

of an elder by learning what his duties as an elder are and then by doing them. As with an elder, so with a deacon, a teacher, a priest, a bishop, and each who holds office in the priesthood.

Duty as a bishop

In 1950 the call of duty came to me as a bishop. The responsibilities were many and varied. The Doctrine and Covenants provided a sure guide. The words of the Apostle Paul to Timothy pertaining to the office of a bishop were sobering. The *General Handbook* was helpful. The principal areas of administration were spelled out by leaders, both stake and general: The bishop (1) is the father of the ward; (2) is the president of the Aaronic Priesthood; (3) provides for the poor, the needy; (4) is responsible for keeping proper records; and (5) is the common judge in Israel.

Then came an unusual assignment from Church headquarters. Bishops were to provide each serviceman a subscription to the *Church News* and the *Improvement Era* and were to write a personal letter to every serviceman each month. The Korean War was raging. Our ward had twenty-three members in uniform. The priesthood quorums, with effort, supplied the funds for the subscriptions to the publications. Since I had served in the Navy in World War II, I knew the importance of a letter from home. I began the task, even the duty, to write twenty-three personal letters each month. After all these years, I still have copies of many of my letters and the responses received. Tears come easily when these letters are reread. It is a joy to learn again of a soldier's pledge to live the gospel, a sailor's decision to keep faith with his family.

"Leave unto the Lord the rest"

One evening I handed to a lady in the ward the stack of twenty-three letters for the current month. Her assignment was to handle the mailing and to

maintain the constantly changing address file. She glanced at one envelope and, with a smile, asked, "Bishop, don't you ever get discouraged? Here is another letter to Brother Bryson. This is the seventeenth letter you have sent to him without a reply."

I responded, "Well, maybe this will be the month." And it was. His reply is a keepsake, a literal treasure. It was postmarked "APO San Francisco." He was serving far away on a distant shore, isolated, homesick, alone. He wrote: "Dear Bishop, I ain't much at writin' letters. [I could have told him that seventeen months earlier.] Thank you for the *Church News* and magazines, but most of all thank you for the personal letters. I have turned over a new leaf. I have been ordained a priest in the Aaronic Priesthood. My heart is full. I am a happy man."

My brethren, Brother Bryson was no happier than was his bishop. I had learned the practical application of the adage, "Do your duty; that is best. Leave unto the Lord the rest."

Years later, while attending the Salt Lake Cottonwood Stake when Elder James E. Faust served as president, I related that account in an effort to encourage attention to our servicemen. After the meeting, a fine-looking young man came forward. He took my hand in his and asked, "Bishop Monson, do you remember me?"

I replied, "Brother Bryson! How are you? What are you doing in the Church?"

With warmth and obvious pride, he responded, "I'm fine. I serve in the presidency of my elders quorum. Thank you again for your concern for me and the personal letters which you sent and which I treasure."

Father, where shall I work today?
And my love flowed warm and free.

Then He pointed out a tiny spot
And said, "Tend that for me."

I answered quickly, "Oh no; not that!

Why, no one would ever see,
No matter how well my work was done;

Not that little place for me."

And the word He spoke, it was not stern;

He answered me tenderly:

"Ah, little one, search that heart of thine.

Art thou working for them or for me?

Nazareth was a little place,
And so was Galilee."

(Meade McGuire.)

To those who obey Him

Brethren, let us learn our duty. Let us, in the performance of our duty, follow in the footsteps of the Master. As you and I walk the pathway Jesus walked, let us listen for the sound of sandaled feet. Let us reach out for the Carpenter's hand. Then we shall come to know Him. He may come to us as one unknown, without a name, as by the lakeside He came to those men who knew Him not. He speaks to us the same words, "Follow thou me" (John 21:22), and sets us to the task which He has to fulfill for our time. He commands, and to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal Himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings that they shall pass through in His fellowship; and they shall learn by their own experience who He is.

We will discover He is more than the Babe in Bethlehem, more than the carpenter's son, more than the greatest teacher ever to live. We will come to know Him as the Son of God, our Savior and our Redeemer. When to Him came the call of duty, He answered, "Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever" (Moses 4:2). May we do likewise I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

The choir and congregaton will now join in singing "Redeemer of Israel," following which President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, will speak to us.

The choir and congregation sang "Redeemer of Israel."

President Gordon B. Hinckley spoke without further announcement.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

I have a duty to speak to you. Beyond that, it is a great privilege and a tremendous opportunity, and I seek the direction of the Holy Spirit.

The question of a mission

I have been so appreciative of this returned missionary chorus who has sung to us this night. I have heard them and their kind sing all across this world. I wish that there were time for them to sing to us "Ye elders of Israel, come join now with me" (*Hymns*, 1985, no. 319). They could do it in English English, American English, Australian English, New Zealand English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Cantonese, and other languages. Thank you, brethren, for the music with which you have blessed us.

What Brother Monson said and the presence of this chorus have set a theme for me.

I spoke with a young man the other evening who is deeply troubled over the question of whether he should go on a mission. He outlined a program of education which would be tremendously challenging. He spoke of his love for a beautiful girl and of the feeling that he could not leave her. He spoke of financial problems which would entail sacrifice.

Personal missionary experience

I told him that I could understand his feelings. I told him his concerns were similar to those of many others, including some I had experienced in my

own life. At his age, I was in the university. It was the time of the worst economic depression in the history of the world. Unemployment in this area was about 35 percent, and most of the unemployed were husbands and fathers, since relatively few women worked in the labor force. Very few missionaries were going into the field at that time. We send out as many in a week now as then went during the entire year. I received my bachelor's degree and planned on somehow attending graduate school. Then the bishop came with what seemed to me a shocking suggestion. He spoke of a mission. I was called to go to England which, at that time, was the most expensive mission in the world. The cost per month was the equivalent of what would be about \$500 now.

We discovered that my mother, who had passed away, had established a small savings account to be available for this purpose. I had a savings account in a different place, but the bank in which I had mine had failed. There was then no government insurance program to cover its failure as there is now. My father, a man of great faith and love, supplied the necessary means, with all of the family cooperating at a sacrifice. As I look back upon it, I see all of it as a miracle. Somehow the money was there every month.

The work in the field was not easy. It was difficult and discouraging. But what a wonderful experience it was. In retrospect, I recognize that I was probably a selfish young man when I arrived in Britain. What a blessing it became to set aside my own selfish interests to the

greater interests of the work of the Lord. I had the association of tremendous young men and women. They have become treasured friends whom I have known and loved now for more than half a century.

The girl I left came to mean more to me while I was away. Next spring, we shall commemorate our fiftieth wedding anniversary.

An instrument in the Lord's hands

How profoundly grateful I am for the experience of that mission. I touched the lives of a few who have, over the years, expressed appreciation. That has been important. But I have never been greatly concerned over the number of baptisms that I had or that other missionaries had. My satisfaction has come from the assurance that I did what the Lord wanted me to do and that I was an instrument in His hands for the accomplishment of His purposes. In the course of that experience, there became riveted into my very being a conviction and knowledge that this is in very deed the true and living work of God, restored through a prophet for the blessing of all who will accept it and live its principles.

Count your blessings

There may be a few young men in this vast audience tonight who may be wondering, ever so seriously, whether they should go on missions. There may be a scarcity of money. There may be compelling plans for education. There may be that wonderful girl you love and feel you cannot leave. You say to yourself, "The choice is mine."

That is true. But before you make a decision against a mission, count your blessings, my dear friend. Think of all the great and marvelous things you have—your very life, your health, your parents, your home, the girl you love. Are they not all gifts from a generous Heavenly Father? Did you really earn them alone, independent of His blessing? No, the lives of all of us are in His

hands. All of the precious things that are ours come from Him who is the giver of every good gift.

The greatest investment

I am not suggesting that He will withdraw His blessings and leave you bereft if you do not go on a mission. But I am saying that out of a spirit of appreciation and gratitude, and a sense of duty, you ought to make whatever adjustment is necessary to give a little of your time—as little as two years—consecrating your strength, your means, your talents to the work of sharing with others the gospel, which is the source of so much of the good that you have.

I promise that if you will do so, you will come to know that what appears today to be a sacrifice will prove instead to be the greatest investment that you will ever make.

Let there be no hesitancy in your decision. Live worthy of a call, and respond without hesitation when that call comes. Go forth with a spirit of dedication, placing yourself in the hands of the Lord to do His great work.

The Church, the Lord, and the world need you

To you younger boys, may I encourage you to save money now for a future mission. Put it in a place where it is safe, not in a speculative account where it may be endangered. Consecrate it for this great purpose, and let it not be used for any other. Prepare yourselves. Attend seminary and institute. Prayerfully read the Book of Mormon.

I hear much these days of costly youth excursions to exotic places during spring breaks and at other times. Why not stay near home and put the money in your future missionary accounts? Someday you will be grateful you did.

The Church needs you. The Lord needs you. The world needs you—yes, ten thousand more of you. There are many out there who need exactly what

you have to offer. They are not easy to find, but they will not be found unless there are those who are prepared and willing to seek them out. God bless you each one, every one of you, that a mission may be a planned and essential part of the program of your lives.

Now, I wish to say a word to all who are here. It is simply a reminder of the obligation, the duty, each has to share with others the precious gospel of Jesus Christ.

I was going to tell you the story of a friend who recently joined the Church. Rather than do that, I am going to ask him to tell it himself.

May I introduce Brother William Sheffield, who was baptized last November. Brother Sheffield, come and tell us of your experience.

William R. Sheffield

My dear brothers, following law school at Berkeley, I developed a successful private practice, particularly with international clients, including Indira Gandhi, former prime minister of India.

For years as a lawyer I had sought a judicial appointment. The day the governor of California called to say I had been appointed to the Superior Court was exhilarating and filled with visions of perhaps, someday, even the Supreme Court. But then, after less than two years as a judge and after just purchasing a new home, we decided to leave this nearly idyllic life. I had heard the Lord call me to the seminary. In response, my wife and I agreed that from then on we would always trust in the Lord, agreeing to be as leaves in a stream—two leaves in His stream, obeying His call, wanting more than anything else to follow Him.

From judgeship to divinity school

But I had not always followed Christ. For many years, I was uncertain who He was or how I could get close to

Him. Almost daily I silently asked myself: Is there a purpose to life? Why am I here? Where am I going? Is the meaning of life found in chasing after the most pleasurable way to get through it—or is there something more? My Christian friends told me all I had to do was “knock and the door will be opened unto you, seek and ye shall find.” (See Matthew 7:7.)

I began knocking. And as I knocked, the Lord answered. Like a seed growing within me, the gospel began taking over my life. I felt the Spirit calling me. I applied at the Yale Divinity School and was accepted. I resigned my judgeship, we rented out our home in southern California, and headed to New Haven, Connecticut. I was in the divinity school though not yet a member of any church.

A very special ward

Arriving in New Haven, we began searching for a home near the campus. However, the Lord had other ideas. Try as we did, we could not find the house we wanted near Yale. Looking back, I now know why. The Lord wanted us in a very special ward about forty miles south of Yale, the New Canaan First Ward.

Many miracles later we found ourselves attending our first Sunday sacrament meeting in this ward. We were received as though we were expected. We had not been inside the building longer than about five minutes when we were introduced to the bishop and his counselors and invited to a dinner party that week. But my attention was first captured by the radiant spirituality of particularly the male members. I wondered: How could they live their professional lives in the fastest fast lane of them all, New York City, yet continue to radiate such a deep spirituality? What was it that caused the tears to well up in their eyes as they testified that Christ lives and the Church is true? I needed to find out.

Joseph Smith story

But I didn't particularly want to be a Mormon, I told my friends. Since I was in the divinity school, I presumed the Lord wanted me in the ministry. What would I do after graduating with an advanced degree in religion if I became a Mormon? Yet I wanted to be the leaf in a stream that I had promised the Lord I would be when we left California.

During the entire time that I was working through, struggling with, and fighting the Joseph Smith story, my friends in the ward were patient, loving, and gentle. Every time I would tell the bishop that Joseph Smith's story was more Disney than Disney, he would tell me, "Maybe so—but it's all true." Every time I would tell the bishop's counselor, "Joseph's story can't be true," he would say to me, "Yes, it is." They genuinely loved me, and I them.

For months I examined, cross-examined, reflected, pondered, and prayed about the Joseph Smith story and the Book of Mormon. I found the book complex, sophisticated, doctrinally profound, and beautiful. The more I studied the text, the more profound and beautiful it became.

Testimony, I know

Much happened over the months. I told my friends and my wife, who was an inactive Mormon and who was beginning to feel some interest in the faith of her forebears, that I would not join the Church to please them, as much as I loved them. I would join only when I had a testimony—when I could say, as a direct witness, that I *know* Joseph Smith was a prophet, that the Book of Mormon is gospel, and the Latter-day Saint church is His church.

In September of last year, the Lord blessed me with that testimony. I now know, without any doubt or uncertainty, without even the ability to conjure up an imaginary doubt, that in the

premortal life the Lord selected Joseph Smith as His prophet in the latter days, that the Book of Mormon was preserved by Christ Himself and delivered to Joseph Smith for translation, and that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is His church.

I owe a great debt to the New Canaan First Ward and to my dear wife. Their patience, their steadfast loyalty to the restored gospel, and their love for me all combined together to affect me eternally.

I still am uncertain as to what the Lord has in mind for me when I graduate from the Yale Divinity School, but I know this: my wife and I will always continue to serve God, in His church, as leaves in a stream.

I say this in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley: Become examples and teach the word of God

Thank you, Brother Sheffield. I am convinced that there are many, many thousands of men such as this good man who, with warmth and welcome, can be led to the eternal truths of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. They are looking for something better than they have. They must be friendship. They must be fellowshipped. They must be made to feel comfortable and at home, so they can observe in the lives of the members of the Church those virtues they wish for themselves. God bless us, my beloved brethren, to become examples such as influenced Brother Sheffield.

The world is our responsibility. We cannot evade it. I think of the words of Jacob in the Book of Mormon, who with his brother Joseph had been consecrated a priest and teacher unto the people:

"And we did magnify our office unto the Lord, taking upon us the responsibility, answering the sins of the people upon our own heads if we did not teach them the word of God with all diligence" (Jacob 1:19).

God bless you, my beloved brethren, young and old, to be faithful to the great responsibility placed upon us to share with others this most precious of all things, I humbly ask, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We have just listened to President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, and Brother William R. Sheffield.

President Ezra Taft Benson, our beloved prophet leader, will be our concluding speaker.

Before President Benson speaks, we note that the nationwide CBS Radio Tabernacle Choir broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 Sunday morning.

Those desiring to attend must be in their seats before 9:15 A.M.

As you leave this priesthood meeting tonight, we remind you to obey traffic rules, to use caution, and to be courteous in driving.

The beautiful music for this priesthood session has been furnished by a returned missionary choir from Brigham Young University.

We are grateful to you brethren for your inspiring music and express sincere thanks for the service you have given here tonight.

Following President Benson's closing remarks, the choir will sing "Carry On." The benediction will be pronounced by Elder Loren C. Dunn, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

President Ezra Taft Benson

My beloved brethren, this has been a glorious meeting.

I have been especially pleased to see the number of young men in attendance this evening. With all my heart I love the youth of the Church. I have spent much of my life in their service, and their well-being and happiness are among my greatest concerns.

Tonight I would like to speak directly to you young men of the Aaronic Priesthood. I am grateful that many of your fathers and priesthood leaders are with you, for I would like them to hear my message also.

Youth of the noble birthright

Young men of the Aaronic Priesthood, you have been born at this time for a sacred and glorious purpose. It is not by chance that you have been reserved to come to earth in this last dispensation of the fulness of times. Your birth at this particular time was fore-ordained in the eternities.

You are to be the royal army of the Lord in the last days. You are "youth of

the noble birthright" (*Hymns*, 1985, no. 255).

In the spiritual battles you are waging, I see you as today's sons of Helaman. Remember well the Book of Mormon account of Helaman's two thousand stripling warriors and how the teachings of their mothers gave them strength and faith. These marvelous mothers taught them to put on the whole armor of God, to place their trust in the Lord, and to doubt not. By so doing, not one of these young men was lost. (See Alma 53:10-23; 56:41-56.)

Honor the family unit

My young brethren, I counsel each of you to draw close to your own mother. Respect her. Honor her. Receive your mother's counsel as she loves and instructs you in righteousness. And honor and obey your father as he stands as the head of the home, emulating his manly qualities.

Young men, the family unit is forever, and you should do everything in your power to strengthen that unit. In

your own family, encourage family home evenings and be an active participant. Encourage family prayer and be on your knees with your family in that sacred circle. Do your part to develop real family unity and solidarity. In such homes, there is no generation gap.

Your most important friendships should be with your own brothers and sisters and with your father and mother. Love your family. Be loyal to them. Have a genuine concern for your brothers and sisters. Help carry their load so you can say, like the lyrics of that song, "He ain't heavy; he's my brother."

Remember, the family is one of God's greatest fortresses against the evils of our day. Help keep your family strong and close and worthy of our Father in Heaven's blessings. As you do, you will receive faith and strength which will bless your lives forever.

Program of daily reading and pondering scriptures

Next, young men, may I admonish you to participate in a program of daily reading and pondering of the scriptures. We remember the experience of our beloved prophet President Spencer W. Kimball. As a fourteen-year-old boy he accepted the challenge of reading the Bible from cover to cover. Most of his reading was done by coal oil light in his attic bedroom. He read every night until he completed the 1,519 pages, which took him approximately a year; but he attained his goal.

Of the four great standard works of the Church—the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price—I would particularly urge you to read again and again the Book of Mormon and ponder and apply its teachings. The Book of Mormon was referred to by the Prophet Joseph Smith as "the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion" (*History of the Church*, 4:461).

Young men, the Book of Mormon will change your life. It will fortify you

against the evils of our day. It will bring a spirituality into your life that no other book will. It will be the most important book you will read in preparation for a mission and for life. A young man who knows and loves the Book of Mormon, who has read it several times, who has an abiding testimony of its truthfulness, and who applies its teachings will be able to stand against the wiles of the devil and will be a mighty tool in the hands of the Lord.

Patriarchal blessing

Further, I would encourage you brethren of the Aaronic Priesthood to receive a patriarchal blessing. Study it carefully and regard it as personal scripture to you—for that is what it is. A patriarchal blessing is the inspired and prophetic statement of your life's mission together with blessings, cautions, and admonitions as the patriarch may be prompted to give. Young men, receive your patriarchal blessing under the influence of fasting and prayer, and then read it regularly that you may know God's will for you.

Attendance at Church meetings

May I now direct your attention to the importance of attending all of your Church meetings. Faithful attendance at Church meetings brings blessings you can receive in no other way.

Attend your sacrament meeting every Sunday. Listen carefully to the messages. Pray for the spirit of understanding and testimony. Be worthy to prepare and bless and pass the sacrament. Come to the sacrament table with clean hands and a pure heart.

Attend your Sunday School classes every Sunday. Listen carefully to the lesson and participate in class discussions. Gospel scholarship and an increase in testimony will result.

Attend your priesthood quorum meetings every Sunday, and your quorum activities held on weeknights. Learn well your priesthood responsi-

bilities, and then perform them with diligence and reverence.

Set your goals to attain excellence

Young men, take full advantage of the Church programs. Set your goals to attain excellence in the achievement programs of the Church. Earn the Duty to God Award—one of our most significant priesthood awards. Become an Eagle Scout. Do not settle for mediocrity in the great Scouting program of the Church.

Regularly attend seminary and be a seminary graduate. Seminary instruction is one of the most significant spiritual experiences a young man can have.

Our duty is to preach the gospel

May I now speak with you about missionary service in the kingdom. I feel very deeply about this. I pray that you will understand the yearnings of my heart. The Prophet Joseph Smith declared, "After all that has been said, [our] greatest and most important duty is to preach the Gospel" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 113).

The Lord wants every young man to serve a full-time mission. Currently, only a fifth of the eligible young men in the Church are serving full-time missions. This is not pleasing to the Lord. We can do better. We *must* do better.

Respond to His call

Not only should a mission be regarded as a priesthood duty, but every young man should look forward to this experience with great joy and anticipation. What a privilege—what a sacred privilege—to serve the Lord full time for two years with all your heart, might, mind, and strength.

You can do nothing more important. School can wait. Scholarships can be deferred. Occupational goals can be postponed. Yes, even temple marriage should wait until after a young man has

served an honorable full-time mission for the Lord. And I would admonish you to date only faithful young women who also believe this and give you that encouragement.

Young men, look forward to full-time missionary service. Show your love and commitment to the Lord by responding to His call to serve. Know that the real purpose in going into the mission field is to bring souls unto Christ, to teach and baptize our Heavenly Father's children so that you may rejoice with them in the kingdom of our Father. (See D&C 18:15.)

Prepare now for your mission by doing these things we have discussed this evening.

Live clean life

Another vital ingredient in preparation for your mission is to always live a clean life. We want morally clean young men in the mission field. We want you to live the clean life all of your life. We want the morally clean life to be your way of life.

Yes, one can repent of moral transgression. The miracle of forgiveness is real, and true repentance is accepted of the Lord. But it is not pleasing to the Lord prior to a mission, or at any time, to sow one's wild oats, to engage in sexual transgression of any nature, and then to expect that planned confession and quick repentance will satisfy the Lord.

President Kimball was emphatic on this point. In his marvelous book *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, he stated: "That man who resists temptation and lives without sin is far better off than the man who has fallen, no matter how repentant the latter may be. . . . How much better it is never to have committed sin!" (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969, p. 357).

Repentance and miracle of forgiveness

One of our fine stake presidents shared with us the following experience:

"I remember a girl that I had gone to high school with. She was from a good LDS family, but when she was a junior in high school, she began to compromise her standards and principles.

"I remember how stunned I was one afternoon as a group of us were in the back of the bus riding home from school. We were talking about the consequences of sin or transgression, and she flatly announced that she wasn't worried about committing any sin because her bishop had told her she could easily repent and could be quickly forgiven.

"Well, I was shocked with this flippant attitude that didn't reflect any understanding of repentance or appreciation of the miracle of forgiveness. I was also sure that she had grossly misunderstood the instruction and counsel of her bishop."

Pernicious evils

Adultery, or anything like unto it, is abominable in the sight of the Lord. Elder Kimball also wisely observed:

"Among the most common sexual sins our young people commit are necking and petting. Not only do these improper relations often lead to fornication, pregnancy, and abortions—all ugly sins—but in and of themselves they are pernicious evils, and it is often difficult for youth to distinguish where one ends and another begins. . . .

"Too often, young people dismiss their petting with a shrug of their shoulders as a *little* indiscretion, while admitting that fornication is a base transgression. Too many of them are shocked, or feign to be, when told that what they have done in the name of petting was in reality [a form of] fornication" (*Miracle of Forgiveness*, pp. 65–66).

"Be ye clean"

Young men of the Aaronic Priesthood, remember the scriptural injunction "Be ye clean who bear the

vessels of the Lord" (3 Nephi 20:41; D&C 38:42; see also Isaiah 52:11). Remember the story of Joseph in Egypt, who hearkened not to the wife of Potiphar and maintained his purity and virtue. (See Genesis 39:6–20.)

Consider carefully the words of the prophet Alma to his errant son, Corianton, "Forsake your sins, and go no more after the lusts of your eyes" (Alma 39:9).

"The lusts of your eyes." In our day, what does that expression mean?

Movies, television programs, and video recordings that are both suggestive and lewd.

Magazines and books that are obscene and pornographic.

We counsel you, young men, not to pollute your minds with such degrading matter, for the mind through which this filth passes is never the same afterward. Don't see R-rated movies or vulgar videos or participate in any entertainment that is immoral, suggestive, or pornographic. Don't listen to music that is degrading.

Remember Elder Boyd K. Packer's statement: "Music, once . . . innocent, now is often used for wicked purposes. . . .

"In our day music itself has been corrupted. Music can, by its tempo, by its beat, by its intensity [and I would add by its lyrics], dull the spiritual sensitivity of men. . . .

"Young people," Elder Packer goes on to say, "you cannot afford to fill your mind with the unworthy hard music of our day" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1973, pp. 21, 25; or *Ensign*, Jan. 1974, pp. 25, 28).

Instead, we encourage you to listen to uplifting music, both popular and classical, that builds the spirit. Learn some favorite hymns from our new hymnbook that build faith and spirituality. Attend dances where the music and the lighting and the dance movements are conducive to the Spirit. Watch those shows and entertainment that lift the spirit and promote clean thoughts and actions. Read books and magazines that do the same.

Proper dating

And remember, young men, the importance of proper dating. President Kimball gave some wise counsel on this subject:

"Clearly, right marriage begins with right dating. . . . Therefore, this warning comes with great emphasis. Do not take the chance of dating non-members, or members who are untrained and faithless. [You] may say, 'Oh I do not intend to marry this person. It is just a "fun" date.' But one cannot afford to take a chance on falling in love with someone who may never accept the gospel" (*Miracle of Forgiveness*, pp. 241-42).

Our Heavenly Father wants you to date young women who are faithful members of the Church, who encourage you to serve a full-time mission and to magnify your priesthood.

Prepare to enter mission "on the run"

Yes, prepare well for a mission all your life, not just six months or a year before you go.

We love all of our missionaries who are serving the Lord full time in the mission field. But there is a difference in missionaries. Some are better prepared to serve the Lord the first month in the mission field than some who are returning home after twenty-four months.

We want young men entering the mission field who can enter the mission field "on the run," who have the faith born of personal righteousness and clean living that they can have a great and productive mission.

We want missionaries who have the kind of faith that Wilford Woodruff and Heber C. Kimball had, each bringing hundreds and thousands of souls into the waters of baptism.

Give me a young man who has kept himself morally clean and has faithfully attended his Church meetings. Give me a young man who has magnified his priesthood and has

earned the Duty to God Award and is an Eagle Scout. Give me a young man who is a seminary graduate and has a burning testimony of the Book of Mormon. Give me such a young man, and I will give you a young man who can perform miracles for the Lord in the mission field and throughout his life.

Fathers, be an example

Now I would like to say a final word to the fathers and priesthood leaders in attendance this evening. Fathers, stay close to your sons. Earn and deserve their love and respect. Be united with their mother in the rearing of your children. Do nothing in your life to cause your sons to stumble because of your example. Guide your sons. Teach them.

As I indicated last October as we met in general priesthood session, you have the major responsibility for teaching your sons the gospel. I would encourage you to reread that address. As important as the organizations of the Church are for teaching our youth, fathers have a sacred calling to continually teach and instruct members of their families in the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Priesthood leaders, stay close to your young men

Priesthood leaders, remember that the bishop is the president of the Aaronic Priesthood. Bishops, your first and foremost responsibility is the Aaronic Priesthood and the young women of your wards.

Stay close to your young men. Get inside their lives. A personal interview once a year with them is not sufficient to fulfill your sacred duty. Visit with them often. Attend their quorum and Scout meetings. Go on their campouts. Participate in their youth conferences. Promote father-and-son activities. Talk with them often about a mission, and regularly visit with them about their personal worthiness.

Strengthen the Aaronic Priesthood quorums. Effectively use the videotape entitled "Vitalizing the Aaronic Priesthood Quorums" and the accompanying training guide. These are some of the finest training tools we have in the Aaronic Priesthood. Bishoprics, quorum advisers, and quorum presidencies should regularly use this training program.

What the Lord would have you hear

Now, in closing, my young men of the Aaronic Priesthood, how I love you, how I respect you, how I pray for

you. Remember the counsel I have given you tonight. It is what the Lord would have you hear now—today.

Live up to your godly potential. Remember who you are and the priesthood that you bear. Be modern-day sons of Helaman. Put on the whole armor of God.

"O youth of the noble birthright," with all my heart I say, "Carry on, carry on, carry on!" In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Carry On."

Elder Loren C. Dunn offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY MORNING MEETING

FOURTH SESSION

The fourth session of the general conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 6, 1986. President Ezra Taft Benson conducted.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music with Jerold Ottley directing and John Longhurst at the organ.

Prior to the opening of the session, the choir sang "Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken" without announcement.

President Benson made the following remarks:

President Ezra Taft Benson

Thank God for this Tabernacle Choir.

We are assembled in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City for this, the fourth general session of the 156th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We welcome all who are in attendance whether in the Tabernacle, in the

Assembly Hall where Elders Paul H. Dunn and Philip T. Sonntag are seated on the stand, or who are participating by radio, television, or cable—with time offered by the owners and operators, to whom we are indebted—or by satellite transmission.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic leaders, and officers and members of the Church from many lands who have assembled to worship and to counsel together in this conference.

The Tabernacle Choir under the direction of Jerold Ottley with John Longhurst at the organ is providing the music for this session of the conference.

The choir opened these services by singing "Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken" and will now sing "Our Father, by Whose Name," following which Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "Our Father, by Whose Name."

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin offered the invocation.

The choir sang "An Angel from on High" without announcement.

President Benson

The Tabernacle Choir has just sung "An Angel from on High."

We shall now be pleased to listen to President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

An unfolding miracle

My brethren and sisters, I greet you with love and sincere appreciation. I seek the direction of the Holy Spirit. Today is the birthday of the Church. It was organized 156 years ago, which was "eighteen hundred and thirty years since the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the flesh" (D&C 20:1). Six men participated as the official incorporating body.

Those original six have now become approximately six million. The growth of this work has been a constantly unfolding miracle, and what an exciting and wonderful experience it is to be a part of it. Although storms of adversity have raged against it, it continues to move steadily forward along the course which the Almighty has outlined for it. It does so quietly, without great noise and fanfare, touching for good the lives of men and women across the earth. Its mission is not empire building. Its mission is to teach faith and repentance, and to bring truth and gladness to all who will listen and hearken to its message.

Personal testimony of President Spencer W. Kimball

Five months ago a solemn gathering was held in this great Tabernacle to mourn the passing of a beloved leader. I speak a few words of personal testimony of President Spencer W. Kimball. For forty-two years he served as Apostle and prophet. His moving example of sincere humility, his out-

reaching love for people, his quiet and earnest declarations of faith have touched all of us. The majesty of his life was found in its simplicity. There was never any of the ostentatious, the boastful, the proud evident in his character. Yet there was an excellence that shone like gold. He was a man from whose life the husk of mediocrity had been winnowed by the hand of God. I loved him with that love which men in the service of the Lord come to feel and know.

Transition of authority

Now there is another, and during this conference we shall be constituted as a solemn assembly to sustain as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the man who, under the plan of the Lord, has been chosen, ordained, and set apart to this most high and sacred office.

This transition of authority, in which I have participated a number of times, is beautiful in its simplicity. It is indicative of the way the Lord does things. Under His procedure a man is selected by the prophet to become a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. He does not choose this as a career. He is called, as were the Apostles in Jesus' time, to whom the Lord said, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you" (John 15:16). The years pass. He is schooled and disciplined in the duties of his office. He travels over the earth

in fulfilling his apostolic calling. It is a long course of preparation, in which he comes to know the Latter-day Saints wherever they may be, and they come to know him. The Lord tests his heart and his substance. In the natural course of events, vacancies occur in that council and new appointments are made. Under this process a particular man becomes the senior Apostle. Residing latent in him, and in his associate Brethren, given to each at the time of ordination, are all of the keys of the priesthood. But authority to exercise those keys is restricted to the President of the Church. At his passing, that authority becomes operative in the senior Apostle, who is then named, set apart, and ordained a prophet and President by his associates of the Council of the Twelve.

There is no electioneering. There is no campaigning. There is only the quiet and simple operation of a divine plan which provides inspired and tested leadership.

Personal testimony of President Ezra Taft Benson

I have been a witness, a personal witness, to this wondrous process. I give you my testimony that it is the Lord who selected Ezra Taft Benson to become a member of the Council of the Twelve almost forty-three years ago. It is the Lord who over these years has tested and disciplined him, schooled and prepared him. At the death of the prophet he was ready, not of his own choice nor of his own design. He was called, set apart, and ordained November 10 last.

As one who knows him and who stands at his side, I bear witness that he is a man of faith, of tested leadership, of profound love for the Lord and His work, of love for the sons and daughters of God everywhere. He is a man of proven capacity, who has been tempered in the Refiner's fire.

I am grateful for the privilege of association with President Benson in the sacred relationship of counselor

to prophet. I am grateful for the association of President Monson. I am grateful that the First Presidency is fully organized and functioning unitedly together.

Gospel meets the needs spiritually, intellectually, morally, physically

Under President Benson's leadership, the work of the Lord will continue to move forward. No power under the heavens can deflect it from its course. We may expect that there will be some who will try. Their efforts will be like chipping away at a granite block with a chisel of wood. The stone will not be damaged, but the chisel will be broken.

As Daniel declared in prophecy: "The God of heaven set up [this] kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, . . . and it shall stand for ever" (Daniel 2:44).

It grows because it satisfies the needs and desires of the human heart, regardless of age, sex, race, or language.

Speaking at this pulpit one hundred years ago, in 1886, Lorenzo Snow, then an Apostle and later the President of the Church, said: "A religious system is of but little account when it possesses no virtue nor power to better the condition of people spiritually, intellectually, morally and physically" (JD, 26:371).

This gospel, when accepted and obeyed, meets the needs of men and women everywhere. It has the power to improve the individual in each of these categories—the spiritual, the intellectual, the moral, the physical.

Opportunity of eternal life

In His great intercessory prayer, Jesus declared: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

Such knowledge is the very foundation of spiritual strength. This is the great basic purpose of the restoration of

the gospel in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times—to declare the living reality of God the Eternal Father and of His Beloved Son, the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ. To know them, to love them, to obey them is to have life eternal. It is our mission to declare with words of soberness and truth that God is our Eternal Father, the God of the universe, the Almighty One; and that Jesus Christ is his firstborn, the Only Begotten in the flesh, who condescended to come to earth; who was born in a stable in Bethlehem of Judea, lived the perfect life, and taught the way of salvation; who offered Himself a sacrifice for all, enduring pain and death on the cross; and who then came forth in a glorious resurrection, the firstfruits of them that slept. (See 1 Corinthians 15:20.) Through Him, and by Him, and of Him, all are assured salvation from death and are offered the opportunity of eternal life.

Spiritual strength

This is the great undergirding truth of our faith. It is the overarching canopy under which we find our spiritual strength. With this knowledge we grow spiritually, our spirits in kinship with the Spirit of God. It is the way out of darkness. It affords the strength needed to rise above sin.

I recently received a letter from a man, a business executive. He told of the waste of his life in corrupt living, of the pain he had caused his loved ones. Then the influence of the gospel came into his life. I quote from his letter:

"I have come to know that I have offended greatly my Father in Heaven and His Son. As I begin to better understand His great, yet wonderful expression of love to me in Gethsemane I have learned to be grateful for His atoning sacrifice and for the process of repentance. . . . I have walked that bitter road of darkness and despair for so many years that I desire now only to come into the light. As I continue to read and ponder the scriptures and plead with the Lord for an understand-

ing and forgiveness of my past, I have come to love Him and never will I offend Him again. I will always try to the best of my ability to pattern my life after His."

Example of intellectual and spiritual learning

This restored gospel brings not only spiritual strength, but also intellectual curiosity and growth. Truth is truth. There is no clearly defined line of demarcation between the spiritual and the intellectual when the intellectual is cultivated and pursued in balance with the pursuit of spiritual knowledge and strength.

The Lord Almighty, through revelation, has laid a mandate upon this people in these words: "Seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith" (D&C 88:118).

The other evening I picked up a new publication of the writings of Dr. Hugh Nibley, a man my age whom I have known and admired for many years. On the dust jacket of the book I read these words:

"As a young man he memorized vast portions of Shakespeare and studied Old English, Latin, Greek, and other languages. As a student at Berkeley, he began reading at the southwest corner of the ninth level of the library and worked his way down to the northeast corner of the first level, studying every significant book that caught his eye" (*Old Testament and Related Studies* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co.], 1986).

His encyclopedic knowledge has given him tremendous and well-deserved status among his academic peers. It also has made him a powerful advocate of the work of the Lord. His appetite for learning has been whetted by the gospel he loves.

Thirteenth article of faith

This Church spends a very substantial part of its resources to train the

minds and hands of its young people, whatever their choice of discipline, be it science, commerce, various of the professions, or the arts.

A declaration of our faith reads: "If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things" (Articles of Faith 1:13). This embraces the truth of science, the truth of philosophy, the truth of history, the truth of art. I emphasize the word *truth*. It is a principle set forth in our scripture that "the glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth" (D&C 93:36).

The mind of man is the crowning creation of God, in whose express image man was made. The development of the mind is a companion responsibility to the cultivation of the spirit, as set forth in the revealed principles of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

Moral strength

Accompanying these and growing out of them is the development of moral strength. How sorely this is needed in the world in which we live. Were the standards of Sodom and Gomorrah worse than those of many of this generation?

President Benson, in his opening address yesterday, called on us to repent. Fortunately, there are among those who walk in sin at least a few who have come to know that there is something better, and who now long for forgiveness and an opportunity. I extract a few lines from the letter of one who was excommunicated from the Church because of aggravated immoral behavior. He now writes:

"After I was cut off from the Church, the pain and torment were hell. I did not believe anyone could suffer such pain and still live."

He then pleads for help to come back, and expresses appreciation for those who now are putting their arms around him to give him strength.

Fortify against moral sin

The Church is the guardian and teacher of moral values. Regrettably, there are some who disregard those teachings. Some are enticed by the reading of pornographic writings and the viewing of pornographic materials to set aside self-discipline and become involved in the quagmire of immorality.

In too many cases wives and children become their victims. I have previously spoken from this pulpit concerning child and spouse abuse. I repeat for emphasis an earlier statement:

"Abuse of children on the part of fathers or anyone else has long been a cause for excommunication from the Church. No man who has been ordained to the priesthood of God can with impunity indulge in either spouse or child abuse. Such activity becomes an immediate repudiation of his right to hold and exercise the priesthood and to retain membership in the Church" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1985, p. 66; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, p. 51).

If there be any within the sound of my voice who may be guilty of such practices, let him or her repent, and as a part of that process go to his bishop or her bishop and confess, seeking help to do the right thing to remedy the evil.

I repeat, one of the great purposes of this work, as revealed by the Lord, is to fortify against moral sin. To the degree that we accept and follow these teachings we shall be a happy and blessed people.

Promises of the Word of Wisdom

Finally, there are inherent in the doctrine, the teaching, and the practices of this Church, those elements which will improve the individual physically. The body is the temple of the spirit. It is God's creation as a part of His eternal plan.

As I read and hear of the findings of modern medical science, I give

thanks to our Creator for revealing unto His prophet what we call the Word of Wisdom. It sets forth in language spoken 153 years ago principles now confirmed and taught by modern dietary science. With all of this is given a divinely spoken promise, the like of which is found nowhere else:

"And all saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones;

"And shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures;

"And shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint.

"And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them" (D&C 89:18-21).

What a marvelous, remarkable, and unique statement of religious principle that is. It is a part of our doctrine given by an all-wise Father, our Creator, for our physical and temporal good.

I am not saying that disease will not come, that death will not strike. Death is a part of the divine plan, a necessary step in the eternal life of the sons and daughters of God. But I do not hesitate to say that in this brief but inclusive statement of the Lord is found counsel, given with a promise, which,

if more widely observed, would save untold pain and suffering and lead not only to increased physical well-being but also to great and satisfying "treasures of knowledge" of the things of God.

God be thanked

All of this of which I have spoken comes of the revealed word of the Almighty to bless His children. We invite you, wherever you may be or whatever your circumstances, to come and partake.

God be thanked for this glorious work, for this day of restored truth and light, for the gospel of Jesus Christ. I bear witness of its divinity as I express unto you, my brethren and sisters, my love for each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Our Savior's Love" without announcement.

President Benson

President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has just spoken to us, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "Our Savior's Love."

Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks

"Great pollutions upon the face of the earth"

Recently our family was viewing what was supposed to be a wholesome movie on videotape. Suddenly, one of the actors used a vulgar expression. Embarrassed, we began to smooth this over for our ten-year-old daughter. She quickly assured us that we needn't worry because she heard worse than

that every day from the boys and girls at her school.

I am sure most LDS parents have had similar experiences. The nature and extent of profanity and vulgarity in our society is a measure of its deterioration.

I cannot remember when I first heard profane and vulgar expressions in common use around me. I suppose it was from adults in the barnyard or the

barracks. Today, our young people hear such expressions from boys and girls in their grade schools, from actors on stage and in the movies, from popular novels, and even from public officials and sports heroes. Television and videotapes bring profanity and vulgarity into our homes.

For many in our day, the profane has become commonplace and the vulgar has become acceptable. Surely this is one fulfillment of the Book of Mormon prophecy that in the last days "there shall be great pollutions upon the face of the earth" (Mormon 8:31).

Commandments against profanity

The people of God have always been commanded to abstain from language that is profane or vulgar. Latter-day Saints should understand why.

The names of God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, are sacred. The prophet Isaiah taught that the Lord will not suffer these names to be dishonored—"polluted" as the scriptures say. (See 1 Nephi 20:11; Isaiah 48:11.)

In the third of the Ten Commandments, the Lord commanded ancient Israel: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (Exodus 20:7). This same commandment was repeated to the Book of Mormon people by the prophet Abinadi (see Mosiah 13:15) and to each of us through modern prophets (see D&C 136:21).

Using names of Father and Son without authority

The Doctrine and Covenants gives this example:

"Let all men beware how they take my name in their lips—

"For behold, verily I say, that many there be who are under this condemnation, who use the name of the Lord, and use it in vain, having not authority" (D&C 63:61-62).

This scripture shows that we take the name of the Lord in vain when we use his name without authority. This obviously occurs when the sacred names of God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, are used in what is called profanity: in hateful cursings, in angry denunciations, or as marks of punctuation in common discourse.

Take upon us the name of Christ

The names of the Father and the Son are used with authority when we reverently teach and testify of them, when we pray, and when we perform the sacred ordinances of the priesthood.

There are no more sacred or significant words in all of our language than the names of God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ.

As we read in the Book of Mormon, after the Savior appeared to the people on this continent he taught them that they must take upon them the name of Christ:

"For by this name shall ye be called at the last day;

"And whoso taketh upon him my name, and endureth to the end, the same shall be saved at the last day" (3 Nephi 27:5-6).

Pray unto the Father

He has instructed his followers to call the Church in his name. (See 3 Nephi 27:7-8; D&C 115:4.) In our time this is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The Savior taught that we should begin our prayers by saying, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name" (3 Nephi 13:9; see also Luke 11:2). In the Book of Mormon, the risen Lord gave these further instructions:

"Therefore ye must always pray unto the Father in my name;

"And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you.

"Pray in your families unto the Father, always in my name, that your wives and your children may be blessed" (3 Nephi 18:19–21; see also 3 Nephi 27:7; John 14:13; 15:16).

The scriptures are replete with declarations that the name of Jesus Christ is "the only name which shall be given under heaven, whereby salvation shall come unto the children of men" (Moses 6:52; see also Acts 4:12; 2 Nephi 25:20; 31:21; Mosiah 3:17).

Sacred names of Elohim and Jehovah

The Bible has hundreds of references to the name of God, a sacred word which usually refers to God the Father, or Elohim. (See Genesis; John 3:16.) The ancient prophets also knew and revered the name of Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, Jesus Christ, whom the Bible usually refers to as the Lord (see JST Exodus 6:3; Abraham 1:16, 2:8; Ether 3:1–28; Isaiah 43:3.)

These names were so sacred that the children of Israel were repeatedly commanded not to profane the holy name of their God. (See Leviticus 18:21; 19:12; 20:3; 21:6.) One who blasphemed the name of the Lord was commanded to be put to death by stoning. (See Leviticus 24:16.)

Cataloging the sins of his countrymen, the prophet Ezekiel said, "Her priests have . . . profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and the profane . . . and I am profaned among them" (Ezekiel 22:26; see also 36:20–23).

Throughout the ages, the Lord has directed that "whatsoever ye shall do, ye shall do it in my name" (3 Nephi 27:7). God the Father commanded that Adam and Eve and all of their descendants should be baptized "in the name of mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth, which is Jesus Christ" (Moses 6:52).

Signs that follow the believer

At the conclusion of his ministry, the risen Lord identified signs that would follow those who believed (see Mark 16:17–18):

"In my name they shall do many wonderful works;

"In my name they shall cast out devils;

"In my name they shall heal the sick;

"In my name they shall open the eyes of the blind, and unstop the ears of the deaf" (D&C 84:66–69).

When Peter healed the lame beggar, he spoke these words: "Such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6).

When the names of God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, are used with reverence and authority, they invoke a power beyond what mortal man can comprehend.

It should be obvious to every believer that these mighty names—by which miracles are wrought, by which the world was formed, through which man was created, and by which we can be saved—are holy and must be treated with the utmost reverence. As we read in modern revelation, "Remember that that which cometh from above is sacred, and must be spoken with care, and by constraint of the Spirit" (D&C 63:64).

Melchizedek Priesthood

So it is that the Holy Priesthood after the Order of the Son of God is called the Melchizedek Priesthood "out of respect or reverence to the name of the Supreme Being, to avoid the too frequent repetition of his name" (D&C 107:3–4).

The desire and work of Satan is to mislead and corrupt. He seeks to frustrate the gospel plan by which God has provided the opportunity of eternal life for His children.

Satan seeks to discredit the sacred names of God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, the names through which their work is done. He succeeds in a measure whenever he is able to influence any man or woman, boy or girl, to make holy names common and to associate them with coarse thoughts and evil acts. Those who use sacred names in vain are, by that act, promoters of Satan's purposes.

Profanity profoundly offensive

Profanity is profoundly offensive to those who worship the God whose name is desecrated. We all remember how a prophet reacted from a hospital bed when an operating room attendant stumbled and cursed in his presence. Even half-conscious, Elder [Spencer W.] Kimball "recoiled and implored: 'Please! Please! That is my Lord whose names you revile' " (*Improvement Era*, May 1953, p. 320).

The words we speak are important. The Savior taught that men will be held to account for "every idle word" in the day of judgment. "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matthew 12:36-37). He also said, "That which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man" (Matthew 15:11).

Truly, as the Apostle James taught, "The tongue is a fire, . . . an unruly evil" that can defile the whole body (James 3:6, 8).

Relinquish companionship of Spirit

Profanity also takes its toll on the one who uses it. As we read in Proverbs, "A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit" (Proverbs 15:4.) The Spirit of the Lord, the Holy Ghost, testifies of God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. (See 2 Nephi 31:18.) When those names are dishonored, that Spirit, which "doth not dwell in unholy temples" (Helaman 4:24), is offended

and withdraws. For this reason, those who profane the name of God inevitably relinquish the companionship of his Spirit.

As the Apostle Paul taught Timothy, in order to be "approved unto God," we must "shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness" (2 Timothy 2:15-16). Profanity leads to more ungodliness because the Spirit of the Lord withdraws and the profane are left without guidance.

Vulgarity pollutes

Vulgar and crude expressions are also offensive to the Spirit of the Lord.

The Apostle James taught that followers of Christ should be "slow to speak, slow to wrath," and should "lay apart all filthiness" (James 1:19, 21). In the Bible, filthiness is a term associated with sexual sin and with lewd language. (See Ezekiel 16:36; 24:13; Ephesians 5:3-4.) Thus, Paul was surely condemning vulgarity when he wrote the Colossians, "Also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth" (Colossians 3:8).

These biblical condemnations of vulgarity are needed in our day.

Indecent and vulgar expressions pollute the air around us. Relations that are sacred between husband and wife are branded with coarse expressions that degrade what is intimate in marriage and make commonplace what is forbidden outside it. Moral sins that should be unspeakable are in the common vernacular. Human conduct plunging downward from the merely immodest to the utterly revolting is written on the walls and shouted in the streets. Twentieth-century men and women of sensitivity can easily understand how Lot, a fugitive from the actions and speech of Sodom and Gomorrah, could have been "vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked" (2 Peter 2:7).

No artificial boosters

How soberly we must regard the Book of Mormon teachings that "there cannot any unclean thing enter into the kingdom of God; wherefore there must needs be a place of filthiness prepared for that which is filthy" (1 Nephi 15:34; see also Alma 7:21).

Profane and vulgar expressions are public evidence of a speaker's ignorance, inadequacy, or immaturity.

A speaker who profanes must be ignorant or indifferent to God's stern command that his name must be treated with reverence and not used in vain.

A speaker who mouths profanity or vulgarity to punctuate or emphasize speech confesses inadequacy in his or her own language skills. Properly used, modern languages require no such artificial boosters.

A speaker who employs profanity or vulgarity to catch someone's attention with shock effect engages in a babyish device that is inexcusable as juvenile or adult behavior. Such language is morally bankrupt. It is also progressively self-defeating, since shock diminishes with familiarity and the user can only maintain its effect by escalating its excess.

"Our words will condemn us"

Members of the Church, young or old, should never allow profane or vulgar words to pass their lips. The language we use projects the images of our hearts, and our hearts should be pure. As the Savior taught:

"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

"A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things" (Matthew 12:34-35).

The Book of Mormon teaches us that when we are brought before the judgment bar of God "our words will condemn us . . . and our thoughts will also condemn us" (Alma 12:14). Let us

recognize profanity and vulgarity for what they are. They are sins that separate us from God and cripple our spiritual defenses by causing the Holy Ghost to withdraw from us.

We should abstain and we should teach our children to abstain from all such expressions.

Encourage others to abstain from profanity

We can also encourage our associates to do likewise. Where we have the courage to make a friendly request, like Elder Kimball, we will often receive a respectful and cooperative reply. Our married daughter who lives in Illinois had such an experience. As she took her turn car pooling the twelve-year-olds home from the soccer game, her noisy passengers filled the air with profanity. Firmly, but with good humor, she told the boys, "In our family we only use that name when we worship, so we ask you, please don't say that name disrespectfully in our car." The boys immediately complied, and, what is even more surprising, most of them still remembered the next time it was her turn to drive.

We obviously cannot control all that goes on in our presence. Modern revelation suggests one alternative for those who would be clean: "Go ye out from among the wicked. Save yourselves" (D&C 38:42). Sometimes we can remove ourselves from language that is profane or vulgar. If this is not possible, we can at least register an objection so that others cannot conclude that our silence means approval or acquiescence.

Our thirteenth article of faith commits us to seek after things that are "virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy." The language of Latter-day Saints should be reverent and clean. We understand the eternal requirement of cleanliness, and we understand the sacred significance of the names of the Father and the Son.

I testify of God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, and pray that we may be more faithful in honoring their holy names. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

We have just heard from Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Praise to the Man," following which we shall hear from Elder Jack H. Goaslind, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation sang "Praise to the Man."

Elder Jack H. Goaslind

Happiness—source is within

Last summer I saw an interesting picture as I followed a car on the freeway. It was a large station wagon that had obviously endured many road skirmishes. The top rack was loaded with luggage; the seats were loaded with people. Four bare feet hung out the rear window, and elbows and arms hung out the side windows. In the front seat, the mother was wrestling with a feisty child while simultaneously trying to calm an upset infant. The father was desperately trying to negotiate the heavy traffic. It was obviously vacation time for this family. As I surveyed the situation with some degree of empathy, I noticed a bumper sticker which read, "Are we having fun yet?"

I laugh about this scene whenever I recall it. I believe it is amusing because it exhibits a wry insight into human nature. It reveals a very real aspect of the human condition: the largely unfulfilled pursuit of happiness. The implications of the question "Are we having fun yet?" are profound. How many people in this world pursue happiness but find that it eludes them? They contrive pleasures, invent amusements, and invest heavily in recreation. They go abroad in search of this rare gift but fail to see that evidence of it is all around them; the source is within them.

"Men are, that they might have joy"

As I have occasion to be with wonderful people throughout the world, I am often moved by the many individuals I meet who are looking for happiness, but not quite finding it. They yearn and strive and endure, but seem to be asking, "Am I happy yet?" I desire to assure you that happiness is real. It can be experienced here, and we can know a fulness of joy in the hereafter. May I share with you some insights about the kind of happiness promised by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Lehi's words to his son Jacob include a profound truth: "All things have been done in the wisdom of him who knoweth all things.

"Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:24-25).

The "plan of happiness"

Our wise and loving Father in Heaven is concerned for the welfare of his children. He desires to see us happy. The very purpose of our lives can be defined in terms of happiness. The Prophet Joseph Smith said, "Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it" (*History of the Church*, 5:134).

Our yearnings for happiness were implanted in our hearts by Deity. They represent a kind of homesickness, for we have a residual memory of our pre-mortal existence. They are also a foretaste of the fulness of joy that is promised to the faithful. We can expect with perfect faith that our Father will fulfill our innermost longings for joy. In fact, the plan he has given to guide us is called "the plan of happiness" (Alma 42:16). In the meridian of time, it was heralded by angelic messengers as "good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people" (Luke 2:10).

The Book of Mormon makes it clear that happiness is our destiny. It speaks of dwelling "with God in a state of never-ending happiness" (Mosiah 2:41). It is also made clear that "all things shall be restored to their proper order, every thing to its natural frame, . . . raised to endless happiness to inherit the kingdom of God, or to endless misery to inherit the kingdom of the devil." We also learn that we are "raised to happiness according to [our] desires of happiness" (Alma 41:4-5).

Words such as *reap*, *restored*, and *desire* imply that happiness is a consequence, not a reward. We are *restored* to a state of happiness when we have chosen to live according to the plan of happiness. Our joy in God's kingdom will be a natural extension of the happiness we cultivate in this life.

Sin—contrary to nature of God

Our happiness is diminished by at least two things: sin and adversity. Of the two, sin is the most tragic. Sin is the most persistent cause of human suffering and of the two brings the deepest remorse. Sin and the temptation to do evil are part of our mortal test. We are being tried to see if we will choose good or evil. It is a hard test, and only those who have resisted temptation can know and gain the strength thereof. Sin is sin because it destroys instead of saves; it tears down instead of builds; it causes despair instead of hope.

The Book of Mormon speaks of men that are in a "carnal state . . . and in the bonds of iniquity; they are without God in the world, and they have gone contrary to the nature of God; therefore, they are in a state contrary to the nature of happiness" (Alma 41:11). It also records Samuel the Lamanite's warning to the Nephites: "Ye have sought all the days of your lives for that which ye could not obtain; and ye have sought for happiness in doing iniquity, which thing is contrary to the nature of that righteousness which is in our great and Eternal Head" (Helaman 13:38).

The doctrine is concisely summarized by Alma: "Behold, I say unto you, *wickedness never was happiness*" (Alma 41:10; italics added). If we are not pure, we would be miserable in the presence of God and Christ, who are by their very nature happy and joyful and cannot look upon sin with any allowance.

Deliberate decision to do good brings happiness

The suffering that results from sin is most tragic because through our own choices we can choose to avoid it. We have that power. We also have the capacity to repent of our sins and to experience the sweet joy of forgiveness. If we are unhappy, let us examine ourselves to see where we need to repent. If we have questions about what we need to do, or not do, we need only listen to our conscience and follow the promptings of the Spirit.

I am acquainted with a man who rebelled from the Church when he was a youth. He made some mistakes during this time and developed some habits. Eventually, however, he came to himself; he served a mission and returned home to hold many responsible positions in the Church. But he was never quite happy. He could have said as did Nephi:

"I am encompassed about, because of the temptations and the sins which do so easily beset me.

"And when I desire to rejoice, my heart groaneth because of my sins" (2 Nephi 4:18-19).

Finally, in a night of spiritual turmoil, the man confessed to himself that he had never fully forsaken his sins. Although he had not committed sins worthy of Church court action, he still harbored attitudes and thoughts that robbed him of spirituality, and he went through cycles of guilt and despair that dampened his happiness. He made up his mind to change, and he kept his resolve. He broke the chain of sin and despair and, for the first time in memory, began to experience a real, true happiness. If someone had asked him, "Are we having fun, experiencing happiness, yet?" he could have answered, "Yes, more happiness, or joy, than I could have imagined."

Striving for happiness is a long, hard journey with many challenges. It requires eternal vigilance to win the victory. You cannot succeed with sporadic little flashes of effort. Constant and valiant living is necessary. That is why patience and faith are so often associated in the scriptures. You must "withstand every temptation of the devil, with [your] faith on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Alma 37:33). But remember, faith is not a magical formula. It requires that you make a deliberate decision to do good and then carry out your decision. Do it. Simply do it, and do it long enough that you experience success, no matter how hard it may seem. Your victory over self brings communion with God and results in happiness—lasting and eternal happiness.

Preserve happiness in midst of trouble and trial

The other thing that may diminish our happiness is adversity. Adversity is also part of our mortal probation, experienced by everyone. It is different, however, from sin. While we can choose to avoid sin, we usually cannot choose whether we experience adver-

sity. I am convinced if we are to have happiness in our hearts, we must learn how to preserve it, in our hearts, in the midst of trouble and trial. We can control our attitude toward adversity. Some people are defeated and embittered by it, while others triumph over it and cultivate godlike attributes in the midst of it.

I recall a true story from our pioneer heritage that illustrates how we can choose our response to adversity. Over one hundred years ago a Swedish family who had joined the Church faced a long ocean voyage to America, a train trip from New York to Omaha, and then a trek by wagon train to Salt Lake City. During their train trip they rode in stock cars used to haul hogs. The cars were filthy and filled with hog lice. On their wagon trip across the plains, a healthy baby was born, but their three-year-old contracted cholera. During the night, the father went to a neighboring wagon to borrow a candle, but was told they couldn't spare one. This angered him, and he fumed as he sat in the dark with his son's limp, feverish body in his arms. The boy died that night.

The next morning the wagon master said they would hold a short funeral and bury the boy in a shallow grave. They were in Indian country and didn't have time to do more. The father insisted on staying behind and digging a grave deep enough so the animals would not disturb the body. They experienced other hardships before they reached Salt Lake City.

Now, both the mother and the father experienced the same trials, but the father became withdrawn, cantankerous, and bitter. He stopped going to church, found fault with Church leaders. He became caught up in his own miseries, and the light of Christ grew dimmer and dimmer in his life.

On the other hand, the mother's faith increased. Each new problem seemed to make her stronger. She became an angel of mercy—filled with empathy, compassion, and charity. She

was a light to those around her. Her family gravitated toward her and looked to her as their leader. She was happy; he was miserable. (See Steve Dunn Hanson, *Ensign*, Feb. 1981, pp. 54-55).

Service gives capacity to endure own trials

I would offer one key to maintaining your happiness in spite of adversity. Christ said, "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it" (Luke 9:24). If you would find happiness and joy, lose your life in some noble cause. A worthy purpose must be at the center of every worthy life. President Stephen L. Richards noted that life is a mission, not a career. (See *Where Is Wisdom* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1955], p. 74.) As Church members, our mission should be the greatest, noblest mission in the universe—the salvation of souls. President David O. McKay was fond of quoting the poet Robert Browning, who said, "There is an answer to the passionate longings of the heart for fullness, and I knew it, and the answer is this: Live in all things outside yourself by love, and you will have joy. That is the life of God; it ought to be our life. In him it is accomplished and perfect; but in all created things it is a lesson learned slowly and through difficulty" (quoted in *Stepping Stones to an Abundant Life*, comp. Llewelyn R. McKay [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1971], p. 119).

Service helps us forget our own travails; it enlarges our souls and gives

us greater capacity to endure our own trials.

"Are we having fun yet, experiencing true happiness?"

Now, I have spoken of our Father's plan of happiness by which he guides us into eternal joy. I have talked about overcoming sin through repentance and self-mastery, and I have spoken of taking the edge off adversity through selfless service. Self-mastery and service are keys to our Father's plan. Christ told his disciples:

"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love. . . .

"These things I have spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (John 15:10-11).

The commandments are guides to happiness. I implore you to follow them.

"Are we having fun yet, experiencing true happiness?" I certainly am. I find great joy in life in obeying and serving. I pray that you may also discover the elusive treasure of true happiness through the means that were ordained by our Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Jack H. Goaslind, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of Seventy, has just spoken to us.

Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us.

Elder Boyd K. Packer

I speak to those who have never read the Book of Mormon. This includes many members who have started to read it several times, but, for one reason or another, have never finished it.

My message may help those as well who have read the Book of Mormon once but have not returned to it.

I have chosen as a title "The Things of My Soul."

The Book of Mormon

Perhaps no other book has been denounced so vigorously by those who have never read it as has the Book of Mormon.

Because of that, I hope to introduce the book in such a way that, in case you decide to read it, you will know beforehand what awaits you.

Except for the Bible, the Book of Mormon is different from any book you have read. It is not a novel. It is not fiction. For the most part, it is not difficult to read. However, like all books of profound value, it is not casual reading. But if you persist, I assure you that it will be the most rewarding book you have ever set your mind to read.

The Book of Mormon is not biographical, for not one character is fully drawn. Nor, in a strict sense, is it a history.

Writers of the Book of Mormon

While it chronicles a people for 1,021 years and has the record of an earlier people, it is in fact not a history of those people. It is the saga of a message, a testament. As the influence of that message is traced from generation to generation, more than twenty writers record the fate of individuals and of civilizations who accepted or rejected that testament.

The saga began in Jerusalem six hundred years before Christ. King Zedekiah ruled the doomed kingdom of Judah.

The prophet Lehi was warned in a dream to take his family and leave Jerusalem before that destruction which soon was to be recorded by the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah. (See Jeremiah 44:1-8.)

Lehi was commanded of the Lord to obtain and take with them a record of their people. It is with that record, the brass plates of Laban, that the saga of the Book of Mormon began.

Lehi's son Nephi obtained the record for his father and said, "It is wisdom in God that we should obtain

these records, that we may preserve unto our children the *language* of our fathers" (1 Nephi 3:19; italics added).

They found that the record contained—

- "The five books of Moses, which gave an account of the creation of the world, and also of Adam and Eve, who were our first parents" (1 Nephi 5:11).
- And "the *words . . .* of all the holy prophets, which have been delivered unto them by the Spirit and power of God" (1 Nephi 3:20; italics added).
- "And also a record of the Jews from the beginning, even down to the commencement of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah";
- And "a genealogy of [Lehi's] fathers" (1 Nephi 5:12, 14).

Lehi's little band left Jerusalem with the record. In time, they were separated from their homeland by an ocean. But they had that precious spiritual record.

A later prophet, Benjamin, said of this record:

"Were it not for these things, which have been kept and preserved by the hand of God, that we might read and understand of *his mysteries*, and have his *commandments*, . . . [we] would have dwindled in unbelief" (Mosiah 1:5; italics added).

Large plates of Nephi

A second record joined this saga when Lehi began the chronicles of his little band of sojourners. He kept something of a secular account of their journeys, interspersed with his revelations and teachings and spiritual experiences.

Nephi succeeded his father, Lehi, as keeper of that record, which became known as the large plates of Nephi.

Nephi wrote that "upon [these] *plates* should be engraven an account of the reign of the kings, and the wars and contentions of my people" (1 Nephi 9:4; italics added).

Later, when they grew to be a numerous people, this account was kept by the kings.

No doubt this record contained a great resource of historical information. Generations later, as Mormon abridged this record, he repeated six times that he could not include "a hundredth part" of what was in that record. (See Jacob 3:13; Words of Mormon 1:5; Helaman 3:14; 3 Nephi 5:8; 26:6; Ether 15:33.)

Small plates of Nephi

But it was not the most valuable record, for Nephi was commanded to keep yet another account—not a secular account this time, but a record of the ministry. This record, the small plates of Nephi, was kept by the prophets rather than by the kings.

This account of their ministry became the foundation for what is now the Book of Mormon.

Perhaps the best insight into the purpose for keeping this record is from Jacob, who received the plates from his brother Nephi.

"And he gave me, Jacob, a commandment that I should write upon these [small] plates a few of the things which I considered to be *most precious*; that I should *not touch*, save it were *lightly*, concerning the *history* of this people. . . .

"For he said that the history of his people should be engraven upon his other [large] plates, and that I should preserve these [small] plates and hand them down unto my seed, from generation to generation.

"And if there were *preaching which was sacred*, or *revelation which was great*, or *prophesying*, that I should engraven . . . them upon these [small] plates, and touch upon *them as much* as it were possible, for *Christ's sake*, and for the sake of our people" (Jacob 1:2–4; italics added).

Did you notice that he was "*not* to touch (save it were *lightly*)" on *the history* of the people but he *was* to touch upon the *sacred things* "as much as it were possible"!

"The things of my soul"

Nephi explained:

"It mattereth not to me that I am particular to give a full account of all the things of my father, . . . for I desire the room that I may write of *the things of God*.

"For the fulness of mine intent is that I may persuade men to come unto the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, and be saved. . . .

"Wherefore, I shall give commandment unto my seed, that they shall *not* occupy these plates with things which *are not of worth* unto the children of men" (1 Nephi 6:3–4, 6; italics added).

"This I do that the *more sacred* things may be kept for the knowledge of my people. . . . I do not write anything upon plates save it be that I think it be *sacred*" (1 Nephi 19:5–6; italics added).

Notice why he did as he did:

"I have received *a commandment of the Lord* that I should make these plates, for the special purpose that there should be an account engraven of the *ministry* of my people" (1 Nephi 9:3; italics added).

And then this verse from which I take my title:

"And upon these [small plates] I write *the things of my soul*, and many of the *scriptures* which are engraven upon the plates of brass. *For my soul delighteth in the scriptures*, and my heart pondereth them, and writeth them for the learning and the profit of my children" (2 Nephi 4:15; italics added).

Vision of the tree of life

Those preachings which were sacred, the revelations which were great, and the prophesying, all testified of the coming of the Messiah.

Prophecies concerning the Messiah appear in the Old Testament. But the Book of Mormon records a vi-

sion of that event which has no equal in the Old Testament.

After the people of Lehi left Jerusalem, Lehi had a vision of the tree of life. His son Nephi prayed to know its meaning. In answer, he was given a remarkable vision of Christ.

In that vision he saw—

- A virgin bearing a child in her arms,
- One who should prepare the way—
John the Baptist,
- The ministry of the Son of God,
- Twelve others following the Messiah,
- The heavens open and angels ministering to them,
- The multitudes blessed and healed,
- The crucifixion of the Christ,
- The wisdom and pride of the world opposing his work. (See 1 Nephi 11:14–36.)

Another testament of Jesus Christ

That vision is the central message of the Book of Mormon.

The Book of Mormon is in truth another testament of Jesus Christ.

It is sometimes introduced as “a history of the ancient inhabitants of the American continent, the ancestors of the American Indians.”

That does not reveal the contents of this sacred book any better than an introduction of the Bible as “a history of the ancient inhabitants of the Near East, the ancestors of the modern Israelites” would reveal the contents of the Bible.

The history in the Book of Mormon is incidental. There are prophets and dissenters, and genealogies to move them from one generation to another, but the central purpose is not historical.

As the saga of the message is traced, one writer (Alma) requires 160 pages to cover thirty-eight years, while seven others (Enos, Jarom, Omni, Amaron, Chemish, Abinadom, Amaleki) together use only 6 pages to cover over three hundred years. In either case, the testament survives.

The Book of Mormon is a book of scripture. It is another testament of Jesus Christ. It is written in biblical language, the language of the prophets.

For the most part, it is in easy-flowing New Testament language, with such words as *spake* for *spoke*, *unto* for *to*, with *and it came to pass*, with *thus* and *thou* and *thine*.

You will not read many pages into it until you catch the cadence of that language and the narrative will be easy to understand. As a matter of fact, most teenagers readily understand the narrative of the Book of Mormon.

Prophecies of Isaiah

Then, just as you settle in to move comfortably along, you will meet a barrier. The style of the language changes to Old Testament prophecy style. For, interspersed in the narrative, are chapters reciting the prophecies of the Old Testament prophet Isaiah. They loom as a barrier, like a roadblock or a check-point beyond which the casual reader, one with idle curiosity, generally will not go.

You, too, may be tempted to stop there, but do not do it! Do not stop reading! Move forward through those difficult-to-understand chapters of Old Testament prophecy, even if you understand very little of it. Move on, if all you do is skim and merely glean an impression here and there. Move on, if all you do is look at the words.

Soon you will emerge from those difficult chapters to the easier New Testament style which is characteristic of the rest of the Book of Mormon.

Book of Mormon verifies Bible

Because you are forewarned about that barrier, you will be able to surmount it and finish reading the book.

You will follow the prophecies of the coming of the Messiah through the generations of Nephite people to that day when those prophecies are fulfilled and the Lord appears to them.

You will be present, through eye-witness accounts, at the ministry of the Lord among the "other sheep" of whom he spoke in the New Testament. (See John 10:16.)

Thereafter, you will be able to understand the Bible as never before. You will come to understand much in the Old Testament and to know why we, as a people, hold it in such esteem. You will come to revere the New Testament, to know that it is true. The account of the birth and the life and the death of the man Jesus as recorded in the New Testament is true. He is the Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, the Messiah, the Redeemer of mankind.

The Book of Mormon, another testament of Jesus Christ, will verify the Old and the New Testaments.

Isaiah quoted in New Testament

Perhaps only after you read the Book of Mormon and return to the Bible will you notice that the Lord quotes Isaiah seven times in the New Testament; in addition, the Apostles quote Isaiah forty more times. One day you may revere these prophetic words of Isaiah in both books. The Lord had a purpose in preserving the prophecies of Isaiah in the Book of Mormon, notwithstanding they become a barrier to the casual reader.

Those who never move beyond the Isaiah chapters miss the personal treasures to be gathered along the way. They miss the knowledge of—

- The purpose of mortal life and death,
- The certainty of life after death,
- What happens when the spirit leaves the body,
- The description of the Resurrection,
- How to receive and retain a remission of your sins,
- What hold justice or mercy may have on you,
- What to pray for,
- Covenants and ordinances,
- And many other jewels that make up the gospel of Jesus Christ.

"Ye may know the truth of all things"

It is beyond that barrier, near the end of the book, that you will find a promise addressed to you and to everyone who will read the book with intent and sincerity.

Let me read that promise to you, from the last chapter in the Book of Mormon:

"And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

"And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things" (Moroni 10:4-5).

Direct revelation to you

No missionary, no member can fulfill that promise—neither Apostle nor President can fulfill that promise. It is a promise of direct revelation to you on the conditions described in the book. After you have read the Book of Mormon, you become qualified to inquire of the Lord, in the way that He prescribes in the book, as to whether the book is true. You will be eligible, on the conditions He has established, to receive that personal revelation.

I bear witness that the Book of Mormon is true—that it is another testament of Jesus Christ. I have read the Book of Mormon with a sincere heart, with intent, as a humble serviceman, and thereafter pled with the Lord. I received that revelation. Accompanying that revelation is the revelation that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, our Redeemer, and of him I bear witness, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Press Forward, Saints" without announcement.

President Benson

Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just addressed us, followed by the

Tabernacle Choir singing "Press Forward, Saints."

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will now address us. He will be our concluding speaker.

President Thomas S. Monson

Anniversary of organization of the Church

Today, April 6, 1986, is a day of history. One hundred fifty-six years ago The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized. Numbers were few. Circumstances were modest. But the future beckoned. In solemn assembly this afternoon, President Ezra Taft Benson will be sustained by our hearts and souls, as well as by our uplifted hands, as the thirteenth President of the Church. Prayers of thanksgiving will be offered, words of wisdom provided, and songs of praise sung. Strains of "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet" and "How Firm a Foundation" will emanate from this Tabernacle and reverberate throughout the lands of the earth.

Anniversary of Church welfare program

It was fifty years ago this very day that the prophets of God outlined the general principles which became the "firm foundation" of the Church welfare plan. In a specially called and momentous meeting presided over by President Heber J. Grant and his Counselors—J. Reuben Clark, Jr., and David O. McKay—watershed statements were presented and heaven-inspired counsel provided which have endured the passage of time, which have been rendered valid by the verdict of history, and which bear the seal of God's approval.

On that occasion, President David O. McKay declared, "This organization is established by divine revelation,

and there is nothing else in all the world that can so effectively take care of its members" (in Henry D. Taylor, "The Church Welfare Plan," 1984, p. 26).

President J. Reuben Clark set the tone for the launching of this inspired effort by counseling: "[The Lord] has given us the spirituality. He has given us the actual command. . . . The eyes of the world are upon us. . . . May the Lord bless you, give us courage, give us wisdom, give us vision to carry out this great work" (Taylor, p. 27).

Fifty years have come and gone. Economic cycles have run their course. Societal changes have been numerous. The Church has expanded beyond the valleys of the mountains to the uttermost reaches of the earth. Membership is measured in millions. The word of God, provided on that historic day, is as an island of constancy in a sea of change.

Care for the poor, needy, downtrodden

Let us, for a moment, review the moorings, the underpinnings, even the foundation of the welfare program. Said the First Presidency in that year of announcement: "Our primary purpose was to set up, insofar as it might be possible, a system under which the curse of idleness would be done away with, the evils of a dole abolished, and independence, industry, thrift and self respect be once more established amongst our people. The aim of the Church is to help the people to help themselves" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1936, p. 3).

The holy scriptures leave no doubt concerning the responsibility to care for the poor, the needy, the downtrodden. The organization has been perfected, the duties defined, and the guidelines given.

Counseled by President J. Reuben Clark

I am profoundly grateful to my Heavenly Father for the privilege which has been mine to be tenderly taught and constantly counseled by the prophets of the program.

As a publisher and printer, I had the opportunity to assist President J. Reuben Clark in the preparation of his manuscript which became the monumental book *Our Lord of the Gospels*. What a blessing was mine to learn daily at the feet of such a master teacher and principal architect of the welfare program. Knowing that I was a newly appointed bishop presiding over a difficult ward, he emphasized the need for me to know my people, to understand their circumstances, and to minister to their needs. One day he recounted the example of the Savior as recorded in the Gospel of Luke:

"And it came to pass . . . that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him. . . .

"When he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. . . .

"And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

"And he came and touched the bier. . . . And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.

"And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother" (Luke 7:11-15).

When President Clark closed the Bible, I noticed that he was weeping. In a quiet voice, he said, "Tom, be kind to the widow and look after the poor."

President Harold B. Lee teaches role of Aaronic Priesthood

On one occasion, President Harold B. Lee, who was a stake president in the area where I was born and reared and later presided as a bishop, spoke movingly to the Aaronic Priesthood concerning how the priesthood might prepare for its role in caring for the poor. He stood at the pulpit, took the Book of Mormon in hand, and opened it to the seventeenth chapter of Alma. He then read to us concerning the sons of Mosiah:

"Now these sons of Mosiah were with Alma at the time the angel first appeared unto him; therefore Alma did rejoice exceedingly to see his brethren; and what added more to his joy, they were still his brethren in the Lord; yea, and they had waxed strong in the knowledge of the truth; for they were men of a sound understanding and they had searched the scriptures diligently, that they might know the word of God.

"But this is not all; they had given themselves to much prayer, and fasting; therefore they had the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation, and when they taught, they taught with power and authority of God" (Alma 17:2-3).

We had been given our pattern, provided by an inspired teacher. Reverently, he closed the covers of this sacred scripture. Like President Clark, he too had tears in his eyes.

President Romney teaches from scriptures

Just a few days ago I visited with President Marion G. Romney, known throughout the Church for his ardent advocacy and knowledge of the welfare program. We spoke of the beautiful passage from Isaiah concerning the true fast:

"Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover

him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?" (Isaiah 58:7).

As did President Clark, as did President Lee, President Romney wept as he spoke.

The spirit of welfare work

Appearing as a golden thread woven through the tapestry of the welfare program is the truth taught by the Apostle Paul: "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (2 Corinthians 3:6).

President Ezra Taft Benson frequently counsels us: "Remember, Brethren, in this work it is the Spirit that counts."

What has the Lord said about the spirit of this work? In a revelation given to the Prophet Joseph at Kirtland, Ohio, in June of 1831, He declared: "Remember in all things the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted, for he that doeth not these things, the same is not my disciple" (D&C 52:40).

In that marvelous message delivered by King Benjamin, as recorded in the Book of Mormon, we read: "For the sake of retaining a remission of your sins from day to day, that ye may walk guiltless before God—I would that ye should impart of your substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally" (Mosiah 4:26).

When we depart from the Lord's way in caring for the poor, chaos comes. Said John Goodman, president of the National Center for Political Analysis, as reported this year in a Dallas, Texas, newspaper:

"The USA's welfare system is a disaster. It is creating poverty, not destroying it. It subsidizes divorce, unwed teenage pregnancy, the abandonment of elderly parents by their children, and the wholesale dissolution of the family. The reason? We pay people to be poor. Private charities

have always been better at providing relief where it is truly needed."

Presidential task force

In 1982 it was my privilege to serve as a member of President Ronald Reagan's Task Force on Private Sector Initiatives. Meeting in the White House with prominent leaders assembled from throughout the nation, President Reagan paid tribute to the welfare program of the Church. He observed: "Elder Monson is here representing The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. If, during the period of the Great Depression, every church had come forth with a welfare program founded on correct principles as his church did, we would not be in the difficulty in which we find ourselves today." President Reagan praised self-sufficiency; lauded our storehouse, production, and distribution system; and emphasized family members assisting one another. He urged that in our need we turn not to government but rather to ourselves.

On another occasion in the White House, I was asked to present to a gathering of America's religious leaders an example of our welfare program in action. I could have chosen many illustrations, but selected as typical our response to the Teton Dam disaster in Idaho. The result was dramatic. As the First Presidency stated fifty years ago, "The eyes of the world are upon us." While this is a most important consideration, let us particularly remember that the eyes of God are similarly focused. What might He observe?

Prepared for emergencies?

Are we generous in the payment of our fast offerings? That we should be so was taught by President Spencer W. Kimball, who urged that "instead of the amount saved by our two or more meals of fasting, perhaps much, much more—ten times more [be given] when we are in a position to do it" (*Ensign*, Nov. 1977, p. 79).

Are we prepared for the emergencies of our lives? Are our skills perfected? Do we live providently? Do we have on hand our reserve supply? Are we obedient to the commandments of God? Are we responsive to the teachings of prophets? Are we prepared to give of our substance to the poor, the needy? Are we square with the Lord?

As we look back through fifty years and reflect on the development of the welfare program, as we look forward to the years ahead, let us remember the place of the priesthood, the role of the Relief Society, and the involvement of the individual. Help from heaven will be ours.

Ward welfare work—"Mein Bruder"

On a cold winter's night in 1951, there was a knock at my door. A German brother from Ogden, Utah, announced himself and said, "Are you Bishop Monson?" I answered in the affirmative. He began to weep and said, "My brother, his wife, and family are coming here from Germany. They are going to live in your ward. Will you come with us to see the apartment we have rented for them?"

On the way to the apartment, he told me he had not seen his brother for many years. Through the holocaust of World War II, his brother had been faithful to the Church, once serving as a branch president before the war took him to the Russian front.

I observed the apartment. It was cold and dreary. The paint was peeling, the wallpaper soiled, the cupboards empty. A forty-watt bulb, suspended from the living room ceiling, revealed a linoleum floor covering with a large hole in the center. I was heartsick. I thought, "What a dismal welcome for a family which has endured so much."

My thoughts were interrupted by the brother's statement, "It isn't much, but it's better than they have in Germany." With that, the key to the apartment was left with me, along with the information that the family would ar-

rive in Salt Lake City in three weeks—just two days before Christmas.

Sleep was slow in coming to me that night. The next morning was Sunday. In our ward welfare committee meeting, one of my counselors said, "Bishop, you look worried. Is something wrong?"

I recounted to those present my experience of the night before, revealing the details of the uninviting apartment. There were a few moments of silence. Then Brother Eardley, the group leader of the high priests, said, "Bishop, did you say that apartment was inadequately lighted and that the kitchen appliances were in need of replacement?" I answered in the affirmative. He continued, "I am an electrical contractor. Would you permit the high priests of this ward to rewire that apartment? I would also like to invite my suppliers to contribute a new stove and a new refrigerator. Do I have your permission?"

I answered with a glad "Certainly."

Then Brother Balmforth, the seventies president, responded, "Bishop, as you know, I'm in the carpet business. I would like to invite my suppliers to contribute some carpet, and the seventies can easily lay it and eliminate that worn linoleum."

Then Brother Bowden, the president of the elders quorum, spoke up. He was a painting contractor. He said, "I'll furnish the paint. May the elders paint and wallpaper that apartment?"

Sister Miller, the Relief Society president, was next to speak. "We in the Relief Society cannot stand the thought of empty cupboards. May we fill them?"

The three weeks which followed are ever to be remembered. It seemed that the entire ward joined in the project. The days passed, and at the appointed time, the family arrived from Germany. Again at my door stood the brother from Ogden. With an emotion-filled voice, he introduced to me his brother, his brother's wife, and their family. Then he asked, "Could we go

visit the apartment?" As we walked up the staircase leading to the apartment, he repeated, "It isn't much, but it's more than they have had in Germany." Little did he know what a transformation had taken place and that many who had participated were inside waiting for our arrival.

The door opened to reveal a literal newness of life. We were greeted by the aroma of freshly painted woodwork and newly papered walls. Gone was the forty-watt bulb, along with the worn linoleum it had illuminated. We stepped on carpet deep and beautiful. A walk to the kitchen presented to our view a new stove and new refrigerator. The cupboard doors were still open; however, they now revealed every shelf filled with food. As usual, the Relief Society had done its work.

In the living room, we began to sing Christmas hymns. We sang "Silent night! Holy night! All is calm, all is bright" (*Hymns*, 1985, no. 204). We sang in English; they sang in German. At the conclusion, the father, realizing that all of this was his, took me by the hand to express his thanks. His emotion was too great. He buried his head in my shoulder and repeated the words, "Mein Bruder, mein Bruder, mein Bruder."

Provident plan, precious promise

It was time to leave. As we walked down the stairs and out into the night air, snow was falling. Not a word was spoken. Finally, a young girl asked, "Bishop, I feel better than I have ever felt before. Can you tell me why?"

I responded with the words of the Master: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my

brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40). Suddenly there came to mind the words from "O Little Town of Bethlehem":

How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of his heav'n.

No ear may hear his coming;
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive
him, still
The dear Christ enters in.
(*Hymns*, 1985, no. 208.)

Silently, wondrously, His gift had been given. Lives were blessed, needs were met, hearts were touched, and souls were saved. A provident plan had been followed. A precious promise had been fulfilled.

I testify that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that we are led by a prophet, that sacrifice does indeed bring forth the blessings of heaven. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has been our concluding speaker.

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing one verse of "Truth Eternal." The benediction will be offered by Elder Robert B. Harbertson, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

This conference will be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The choir sang "Truth Eternal."
Elder Robert B. Harbertson offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY AFTERNOON MEETING SOLEMN ASSEMBLY

FIFTH SESSION

The fifth and final general session of the 156th Annual General Conference commenced at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, April 6, 1986.

President Ezra Taft Benson presided and President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session. This session was a solemn assembly, at which the First Presidency of the Church was reorganized.

Music was provided by the Tabernacle Choir directed by Jerold Ottley with Robert Cundick at the organ.

President Hinckley made the following remarks at the outset of the meeting:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked me to conduct this solemn assembly session.

We extend a sincere welcome to all assembled this afternoon in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah in the fifth and concluding session of the 156th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We welcome those seated in the Assembly Hall where Elders Royden G. Derrick and Ted E. Brewerton are seated on the stand. The Tabernacle is filled to capacity, with many thousands on the grounds who are unable to find seating either in the Tabernacle or the

Assembly Hall. We greatly appreciate their desire to be here and wish that we might have facilities to accommodate all of them.

We send our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and many friends everywhere who are participating in these proceedings by radio, television, cable, and satellite transmission.

The Tabernacle Choir with Jerold Ottley directing and Robert Cundick at the organ is providing the music for this session.

The choir will begin this service by singing "Rejoice! A Glorious Sound Is Heard." The invocation will then be offered by Elder J. Richard Clarke, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, who presently is presiding over the South Africa Capetown Mission.

The choir sang "Rejoice! A Glorious Sound Is Heard."

Elder J. Richard Clarke offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

The choir will now sing "Oh Say, What Is Truth?" following which we shall hear from Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The choir sang "Oh Say, What Is Truth?"

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

"Be of good cheer"

Over the last number of weeks as I have contemplated this occasion, I

have been strongly impressed to share some thoughts about the Lord's invitation to "be of good cheer"—yes, to be of good cheer without fear. With world

conditions of riots, protests, arms buildups, wars and rumors of war, mistrust, poverty, disappointments, terrorism, tragedies, etc., there has never been a period in history when there is a greater need to accept another of the Lord's eternal promises.

"Behold, this is the promise of the Lord unto you, O ye my servants.

"Wherefore, be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you; and ye shall bear record of me, even Jesus Christ, that I am the Son of the living God, that I was, that I am, and that I am to come" (D&C 68:5-6).

"For I the Lord am with you"

Good cheer is a state of mind or mood that promotes happiness or joy. Some like to think good cheer is found in a bottle, a six-pack, an injection, a pinch under the lip, rationalization, or self-deceit. Incidentally, it has been my observation over the years that those who try to drown their sorrows with drink only sicken their tomorrows. With God's help, good cheer permits us to rise above the depressing present or difficult circumstances. It is a process of positive reassurance and reinforcement. It is sunshine when clouds block the light.

Recently, while visiting with a wife who had suddenly lost a husband through a tragic death, I was touched by this lovely lady from Washington, Utah, when she said, "My heart is heavy and sad, but my soul is of good cheer." There was a powerful inward cheer dominating the sorrowful situation. The promise, "for I the Lord am with you," was triumphing over heartache and despair. People of good cheer soften the sorrow of others as well as those that weigh mightily upon themselves.

None of us will escape tragedy and suffering. Each of us will probably react differently. However, if we can recall the Lord's promise, "for I the Lord am with you," we will be able to face our problems with dignity and courage.

We will find the strength to be of good cheer instead of becoming resentful, critical, or defeated. We will be able to meet life's unpleasant happenings with clear vision, strength, and power.

Fruits of cheerfulness

All over the world we have many members who are taking the blessings of the gospel to those who will listen. Those who accept and live the teachings of our Savior find the strength to be of good cheer, for he declared, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew 16:25). When we apply this principle in our lives and share it with our associates, it is possible to supplant discouragement, tragedy, and gloom with hope and cheer. The fruits of cheerfulness lie within each of us, side by side with our resolution, priorities, and desires. They will never come from without. They cannot be purchased or stolen. They are above price.

Beautiful "good cheer" lady

When I think of those about us who are well-disciplined and anxiously engaged in being of good cheer, many great examples come to mind. They lift us with their state of mind of gladness, joy, and hope. They seem to move forward happily with an extra dimension of power and love. Let me share an example or two.

One beautiful "good cheer" lady I have loved deeply over the years is very special. For more than thirty-five years her husband has been afflicted with Parkinson's disease.

They have raised six outstanding children. She has cheerfully cooperated in making it possible for him to function well as a father, husband, bishop, high councilor, and successful building contractor. When his mobility has reached discouraging stages of near zero, she has lifted him. Her neighbors, and they are everyone she knows, find her to be the first visitor when there is

an unusual need. Her good cheer is endless. She brings peace of mind and comfort to all with whom she associates. The more I watch her, the more I realize good cheer builds contagious enthusiasm.

What a joy it is to see someone of good cheer, who, when others because of an unpleasant happening or development live in angry silence or vocal disgust, meets the situation with cheerful endurance and good spirits.

Changed a family from despair

Our missionaries worldwide frequently have contacts who would be willing to accept baptism and the gospel of Jesus Christ, but who fear the process. Many are afraid to change. Other less active members of the Church resist the invitation to come back because they fear being incompatible in his paths and with new associates.

We remind all to not fear and to be of good cheer because the Son of the living God, even Jesus Christ, shall stand by you.

Just a few weeks ago, while in Bangkok, Thailand, our hearts were touched by a young lady now living in a state of good cheer she never realized possible. Meaningful change has brought great joy and happiness to her and her family. Let me share this message of good cheer as told in her own words.

"In 1975 there was a family who lived near the main road in a small village. My parents were rather poor. My father worked at the local post office, while my mother stayed home caring for the children.

"As time passed by, my mother became bored with her life as a housewife and set out to find a more exciting way of life. She turned to drink, tobacco, and gambling. Many times she would play cards all day and all night and not return to care for her children.

"Meanwhile, my father was working hard to support his family. Things

at home were not going well, and many times my father and my mother would argue violently.

"One day my father came home and told my mother that if she continued on with her gambling and didn't care for the children, he would have to divorce her. The family faced a crisis. At that time I was helping care for my three younger brothers. My parents asked each child who he or she wanted to live with, Mom or Dad. It was a very difficult decision to have to choose between my mother and my father. It was a time of much suffering and sorrow.

"It was during this time that my oldest sister first met some missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She studied about the Church and came to accept the teachings and adopt them into her life. She asked me to go to church with her. I was very sad and angry at first to think she had changed religions. I had only known the teachings of Buddha and had come to love the customs.

"But I noticed a change in my sister. She was more loving and kind and did many things to help our family. I decided to study with the missionaries. My mother listened also. Before very long, we both realized that we had done things wrong and needed to change our lives. We repented of our sins and were baptized. When my father and two older brothers saw the change in us, they decided to study also. My father had been an important officer and teacher in the Buddhist church. He spent much time studying and reading the standard works. He prayed often and sincerely to know the truth. At last his humble prayers were answered. He knew, as we did, that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was true.

"The true gospel changed our lives and restored happiness to a nearly devastated home and family. We are all very grateful and happy to now be a part of the Lord's church and become familiar with and obey his commandments."

Today this young lady is a missionary for the Church. She and her family are living witnesses that when people come to realize that "I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you," a whole family can change their despair to good cheer.

Avoid self-deceit

In contrast to this family in Bangkok, some of us who have the happiness and good cheer of the gospel can lose it by becoming involved in iniquity and deceit. One of the most destructive forms of deceit is self-deceit.

Modern-day prophets have pled in plainness for us to avoid "get-rich-quick" schemes if we would avoid the heartaches of financial bondage. Perhaps we have not said enough about the fact that too many of us, in our moments of dreaming of grandeur, plant the seeds of economic disaster. Then at a later date when much is lost, we blame those who participated with us. It is difficult to be of good cheer when self-deceit is our companion. When we willingly expose ourselves to the winds and storms of fraud and scam, we should not be surprised when we come down with deficit disease. Over the years of listening to those who have suffered heavy money losses, I have heard many in desperation declare, "I was taken." Often my heart, mind, and the Spirit have prompted me to share, "Yes, you were taken by yourself." We all need to be encouraged to lift up our heads and see where our thoughts and undeclared priorities are taking us. Self-deceit permits us to blame others for our failures.

Self-mastery must triumph

For many years President Ezra Taft Benson has reinforced his talks of love and guidance to our youth with the truth that wickedness never can be happiness. (See Alma 41:10.) In dating and courting, decisions of conduct, to

be effective, must be made before the moment of enticement and temptation surfaces. Too often immoral conduct results from self-deceit. We have allowed ourselves to blame others for the incident of misconduct when our failure to make decisions ahead of time was not thought to be of importance. The thought that wickedness brings good cheer makes reason stare.

A constant effort must be made to lift our daily conduct so that it squares with our knowledge of truth and our standards. Self-mastery must always triumph over self-deceit for us to taste the fruits of good cheer.

Commit to principles

One form of self-deceit is rationalization. We prevent the Lord from being with us because we stray from his paths and explain our actions by consciously or unconsciously making excuses. We say to ourselves: "I did it just to see what it was like." "Everyone else was doing it." "I didn't want to be different." "There was no other way to be accepted graciously." Or "He made me do it."

The companionship of good cheer is possible through keeping the commandments of God, not through rationalization. We must commit ourselves to principles and not live by comparison or excuses. Horace Mann wisely said, "In vain do they talk of happiness who never subdued an impulse in obedience to a principle" (from *Common School Journal*, quoted in *Horace Mann: His Ideas and Ideals*, comp. Joy Elmer Morgan [Washington, D.C.: National Home Library Foundation, 1936], p. 149).

Self-deceit is at best only temporarily successful. Then when the gap between truth and our knowledge of the right and our behavior becomes too large, we are forced to close it with rationalization. The true test is, how do we measure up when Christlike conduct standards are applied.

Use what comes wisely

Cheerfulness will never be a blending of self-deceit and rationalization. Being of good cheer permits us to rise above the moment and situation. Generally, rationalization is unconscious. We slip into it unaware and gradually. It becomes a crutch for those who choose to walk in crooked paths.

The major responsibility for good cheer lies with the individual.

Good cheer is best shared by those who will discard fear, cheerfully accept what comes and use it wisely, become converted, obey the commandments of God, avoid self-deceit and rationalization.

Being of good cheer makes it possible for us to turn all of our sunsets into sunrises.

With good cheer, carrying our cross can be our ladder to happiness. When Jesus comes into our lives, cheer lights the way. How powerful and comforting is the Savior's declaration, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

Be of good cheer, and not fear

He promises to stand by us. He invites us to bear record and witness of him. What a joy and honor it is for me to declare in good cheer and without fear that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God, that he was the Only Begotten of the Father, that he is, and that he will yet come again in God's name. I thank God for the Savior's life, his cheerful love, and his example. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear" (1 John 4:18).

To all mankind everywhere I cheerfully testify that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is our Redeemer. He will sustain us now and forever if we will walk in his paths, be of good cheer, and not fear. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Elder Marvin J. Ashton, a member of the Council of the Twelve.

We shall now hear from Elder James M. Paramore, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and he will be followed by Elder Jacob de Jager, also a member of that quorum.

Elder James M. Paramore

My beloved brothers and sisters, I want to sustain with all my heart and soul this day President Benson and his Counselors. My sixteen years of experiences with them has taught me that they are true prophets, true ministers, and servants of the Lord, Jesus Christ. I know that they love me, and I know that they love you.

"My gratitude knows no bounds"

A few years ago while I was serving as stake president, I had some special, spiritual experiences, one of which I'd like to share with you today.

One time in a stake conference, one of my great friends and reactivated brothers stood and bore his testimony of the power that had come into his life because of the teachings of Jesus Christ and of those who had ministered unto him. His heart was full, his eyes overflowed, as he stood before the audience with his arms around his two sons. He said, "My gratitude knows no bounds. My life has been totally changed by the gospel and by the people who have truly loved me. I will need to spend the rest of my life ministering and teaching others as partial repayment for all that I have received."

And minister and serve he did, with love, unending effort, and great personal concern. As a home teacher, he was assigned to some special, great families who, as he had once been, were away from the Church and had challenges—some almost overwhelming.

“When you lose the Spirit”

He began his work in earnest, going to them as a friend and servant—a true minister. He visited and visited and served them in every way that he could. At first (just as he had been), they didn’t want to talk to him or hear his message, and often they would leave the room when he came. But he understood, for he had done it himself a hundred times to others, leaving his wife alone to hear them. He understood how they felt, expressed as follows by a reactivated man who is currently a bishop in the Church:

“Because I wasn’t living a righteous life, I looked down my nose at others. When you lose the Spirit of the Lord, you don’t judge things properly. You look to judge negatively and to find fault. You wrap yourself in your own cocoon, so to speak, and you rationalize. But when I started working with these men, I found some of these fellows like to do the things that I like to do. I found out that they put their shoes on the same way I did. It was the influence of those men; they accepted me. They put their arms around me, and they accepted me for what I was and who I was. And we went to work, and I ate in their homes. And I just started catching the Spirit.”

Servant, minister, friend

My friend prayed harder and harder for guidance and direction, went to the homes more often, and began to teach and encourage his families to pray for help to overcome problems. He became their servant, their minister, their friend, and now he was able to teach them.

One of the fathers he was teaching had what was thought to be an incurable alcohol problem. Every day after work for twenty years, he bought alcohol and consumed it until he could hardly find his way home. He received friendship and encouragement to pray to heaven for help. One day after his work, while he was driving into the countryside with his bottle, a voice came into his heart to stop his car, walk out into the field, and pray to Father in Heaven for help. His simple prayer was heard by his Father in Heaven, and as he stood up and walked back to his car, all desire to drink liquor left his life. The powers of heaven had descended upon him, and he knew that God lived and loved him.

I heard him later stand before the members and testify of the love of God and of my friend and others who had ministered unto him and taught him. My heart has been touched as I think of how powerful and important the words are: “They taught and did minister one to another” (3 Nephi 26:19).

A holy gift

President Spencer W. Kimball gave these insights about the ministry of the Savior: “Never did the Savior give in expectation. I know of no case in his life in which there was an exchange. He was always the giver, seldom the recipient. Never did he give shoes, hose, or a vehicle; never did he give perfume, a shirt, or a fur wrap. His gifts were of such a nature that the recipient could hardly exchange or return the value. His gifts were rare ones: eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf, and legs to the lame; cleanliness to the unclean, wholeness to the infirm, and breath to the lifeless. His gifts were opportunity to the downtrodden, freedom to the oppressed, light in the darkness, forgiveness to the repentant, hope to the despairing. His friends gave him shelter, food, and love. He gave them of himself, his love, his service, his life. The wise men brought him gold and frankincense. He gave them and all

their fellow mortals resurrection, salvation, and eternal life. We should strive to give as he gave. To give of oneself is a holy gift" (*The Wondrous Gift* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1978], p. 2).

Ammon ministering among Lamanites

One of the great stories on ministering to others comes from Alma in the Book of Mormon. (See Alma 17–19.) Ammon, one of the sons of Mosiah, truly gave himself to teaching and ministering unto the people for over fourteen years. He had waxed strong in the knowledge of truth by searching the scriptures diligently, by much prayer and fasting, and he received the spirit of prophecy and revelation and taught with power and authority from God. He prayed that he might be an instrument in the hands of God to bring the knowledge of the truth unto the Lamanites, a wild and hardened and ferocious people. As he came to the land of Ishmael, the Lamanites bound him and carried him before the king, Lamoni, to slay him or to make a slave of him. *And now the ministry and teaching began.*

The king asked him if he desired to stay among the Lamanites.

"Yes," he responded, "for a time—perhaps even until the day I die."

And the king was pleased with Ammon and untied him and offered him one of his daughters to wife.

But Ammon offered instead himself to be a servant to the king. He tended the flocks with others until a certain day came, and a number of the Lamanites scattered their flocks, causing grave concern, for the king usually killed those who lost their flocks. But this scattering filled Ammon's heart with joy, for he said, "Now I will show the power that is within me." He overpowered the enemy and gathered the flocks, and all were astonished at his power, for none of the enemy could touch him.

As the servants returned and testified of the miraculous things that had happened, the king sought to talk to Ammon, who was even at that moment feeding the king's horses and preparing his chariots. The king was even more astonished and said, "He doth even remember all of my commandments to execute them."

And now, after this type of ministry, of concern for others, even greater opportunities would be offered him to teach and minister unto the king and others. His words as he came unto the king were, "I am a man and thy servant; therefore, whatever thou desirest which is right, that will I do."

And the king, seeing and feeling the great power and spirit of Ammon, asked, "Art thou the great spirit who knows all things?" For Ammon had perceived his very thoughts.

The king, feeling this power, told Ammon that he would grant unto him anything he desired. Ammon now had that great opportunity to really influence the king and all of the people, to now teach them of God, and His truths and to extend His blessings. Miracles had already occurred and would follow as the king himself was raised from his bed by Ammon. Many did believe, were baptized, and became a righteous people. The Church was established among them.

Promise to those who minister, serve, love, and teach the gospel

Ponder these points as you feel the influence of Ammon's teachings, his ministry and great example:

1. The desire of his heart was to bring people to God.
2. He was always a servant, a minister. He was out among the people.
3. He prepared himself by fasting, studying the scriptures, and prayer.
4. He went forth believing he could make a difference with the help of God.
5. He anxiously looked for every possible opportunity to serve.

6. He kept all of the commandments.

7. As a result of doing all of these things, he taught with power and authority and established the Church of God.

The great promise to all of God's children who truly minister, serve, love, and teach the gospel is that one day they may sit at the right hand of the Savior and be received into His presence. May the Lord make us "able ministers" (2 Corinthians 3:6), as were Ammon and my friend. This should be the end result of every principle and truth we learn in the gospel. This is truly the gospel in action.

May we truly minister and teach *all* of our people, but especially reach

out to those who plead in their hearts and through the long, lonely nights for help—our widows, our divorced, our nonmembers, our aged, our less active—to let them know of our concern, our love, and the love of God, until a happier people cannot be found upon the whole land, for "they taught and did minister one to another." In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Elder James M. Paramore.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Jacob de Jager of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Jacob de Jager

My dear brothers and sisters, it is a great pressure to stand before you. Nevertheless I want Elder [Marvin J.] Ashton to know that I follow his teachings and that I am of good cheer.

"Word deafness"

My assignment this afternoon, as I understand it, is to speak; and your assignment this afternoon, as I understand it, is to *listen*. If you finish *your* assignment before I do, please raise your hand!

Furthermore, I want you to know that this is an assignment in which I "rejoice exceedingly," as Alma the Younger in the Book of Mormon would say. And having journeyed from the land of Japan eastward, away to the state of Utah, to attend this general conference, what adds more to my joy, as Alma continues, is to see that you are still my brothers and sisters in the Lord; yea, and that you have waxed strong in the knowledge of the truth. (See Alma 17:2.)

May I also, by way of introduction, add that when foreigners like my-

self are taught the English language, they are usually advised by their teachers to shy away from difficult and complicated words because they may not sound right when spoken with a foreign accent; that is, trying to impress rather than express! Language teachers do, however, allow an exception to this general rule in the case of medical terms, when properly used. I would like, therefore, to share with you a few thoughts on the medical term *logokophosis*, which literally means "word deafness" or, in an extended gospel meaning, "the inability to hear or understand spoken directions."

Some suffer badly from *logokophosis*

The scriptures are replete with directions spoken by holy prophets in all dispensations because "the voice of the Lord is unto the ends of the earth, that all that will hear may hear" (D&C 1:11). Yet time and again we have to be asked to be better listeners. President Marion G. Romney sometimes wonders out loud, "How many

tellings does it take—how many repetitions of counsel? How many individual corrections must be given?”

As parents may pose these questions to their children, Heavenly Father may also wonder the same about *his* sons and daughters. How many of us turn a deaf ear to the admonitions from our modern-day prophets and stay passive, uninvolved, as when we half-listen to the radio?

We all know the hymn “Come, Listen to a Prophet’s Voice” (*Hymns*, 1985, no. 21). Why then do some suffer so badly from *logokophosis*, the inability to hear or understand? And I am of course not referring to those among us who have physically impaired hearing. We often find among *them* the most faithful members of the Church.

Faith relationship with God and Jesus Christ

The Apostle Paul was an inspired teacher, and he gave many spoken directions to the people during his apostolic travels. But often he later had to remind them in writing because many who heard him had apparently neither fully understood nor acted in accordance with the divine principles he taught.

Therefore, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul reminds the Greek people, who composed the Church of God at Corinth, of the gospel truths which he preached to them. He again informed them in writing that Christ died for our sins, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day, and that he appeared to Simon Peter and then to the Apostles. (See 1 Corinthians 15:3–4.)

Since that day, these written words have reminded not just a few hundred Greeks in an outlying area, but hundreds of millions of people in all kinds of places and situations, down through sixty generations, of these important events in the history of mankind.

Paul, being a convert himself, knew what it was like to be dead in sin. Through conversion, he had come to know what it was like to become alive, knowing and accepting the truth that Christ had risen.

Today, as in Paul’s day, every person’s deepest need is for a vital faith relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ, his Son and our Redeemer.

Greatest news that Jesus lives

I testify that through obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we can work out our salvation, and we can even have a partnership with the Lord in saving others. Having a partnership with the Lord in saving others is for me another definition of missionary work. And I want every young man who is preparing himself for a mission to read the Book of Mormon in order to realize that he is indeed preparing himself to have a very personal partnership with the Lord in saving others, for the duration of his mission and beyond. The same is true for every young woman preparing for her mission.

The greatest news of all times is that Jesus lives and that his atoning sacrifice took place for all people; and when they put their trust in him and indeed walk in obedience to his commandments, there is a way for them to gain salvation and exaltation.

How blessed we are to live in this last dispensation when, through the restored priesthood and the Book of Mormon, the globalization of the gospel of Jesus Christ is underway. Latter-day Saints everywhere, as the covenant people of the Lord, play an important part in this process.

Restored gospel a single tune for all

And of course Satan, or that miserable, incurable insomniac, as Elder Neal Maxwell sometimes refers to him,

causes opposition to our missionary effort. I can testify to you that while I labor in the countries of Asia and see the enormous progress there in the work of the Lord, the Spirit repeatedly bears witness to my soul of the truthfulness of the prophetic words of President Brigham Young concerning opposition to the Church. He said:

"The Kingdom will continue to increase, to grow, to spread and prosper more and more. Every time its enemies undertake to overthrow it, it will become more extensive and powerful; instead of its decreasing, it will spread the more, become more wonderful and conspicuous to the nations until it fills the whole earth."

I have come to the realization that the restored gospel plays a single tune for all the world to hear, and I know that the time *will* come when all the world will eagerly respond to that tune. Then, and only then, differences between nations and peoples will disappear, and the world will be one, when the Savior returns to rule and reign for a thousand years.

Prior to that great moment, the spreading and accepting of the glorious gospel message will be universal. It is a dire need for all of Heavenly Father's children everywhere.

Candle of understanding

President [Spencer W.] Kimball, in his *Ensign* article of February 1983, entitled "Are We Doing All We Can?" phrased it so clearly and beautifully: "Our great need, and our great calling, is to bring to the people of this world the candle of understanding to light their way out of obscurity and darkness and into the joy, peace, and truths of the gospel" (p. 5). These were the words of a prophet who spoke to all of us.

And yet in the case of being admonished by a prophet to do missionary work, we sometimes become *complacent*, which according to my English-Dutch dictionary means "self-satisfied or calmly content."

Brothers and sisters, let us therefore prayerfully reevaluate our accountability unto the Lord in this respect.

Good works for future generations

While living in the Orient, I learned two ancient proverbs which apply well in this context. The first one is, "The full evaluation of one's life is not complete until the moment of passing." And the other one is, "We must look for true friends after one hundred years." On the basis of my acquired knowledge of the plan of salvation and the just-quoted sayings, I firmly believe that our good works should be performed *now*, but always with life beyond the veil and future generations in mind.

As Latter-day Saints we are committed to do things that will accomplish much good in this world and in the world to come. It is exactly for this reason that President Kimball had that often-mentioned sign on his desk: "Do It."

May, therefore, those who presently suffer from *logokophosis*, the inability to hear or understand spoken directions, through their own prayerful efforts and under divine inspiration, find the cure for it and be healed and enjoy greater happiness in this life and in the life to come.

And when the Lord calls, with Samuel we can truly say, "Speak Lord; for thy servant heareth" (1 Samuel 3:9). And then, most important of all, that we will be able and willing to be *doers* of the word also, and not hearers only.

For these great blessings I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

He who has just spoken of *logokophosis* is Elder Jacob de Jager of the First Quorum of the Seventy, one whom we all love and appreciate.

Solemn Assembly

President Gordon B. Hinckley

President Benson has requested that I now handle the business of the solemn assembly for which we are met. This is a tremendously significant and sacred occasion for members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints throughout the world.

An invitation to participate

Dating from October 10, 1880, when John Taylor was sustained to succeed Brigham Young as prophet, seer, revelator, and President of the Church, each such occasion has been designated a formal solemn assembly of the body of the Church to express the voice of the Church. There have been ten such in the past. In each case, holders of the various offices of the priesthood were assembled in this Tabernacle and seated by quorums or groups in various areas of the building, each voting as a quorum or group on the officers of the Church as they were presented.

We have now reached a point where many times the number seated in the Tabernacle are assembled in other church halls across the United States and Canada, as well as in other parts of the world. Furthermore, many are seated in their homes, listening to the conference. All of you, wherever you may be, are invited to participate in this solemn and sacred undertaking when we sustain a new President of the Church together with other officers. In these present circumstances, it is considered unfeasible to seat by quorums those assembled in the Tabernacle and the many other halls. We shall, however, vote by quorums and groups. Wherever you are, you are invited to stand when requested and express by your uplifted hands whether you choose to sustain those whose names will be put before you.

General Authorities assigned to the Assembly Hall on Temple Square

will observe the voting in that gathering. In stake centers, a member of the stake presidency will observe the voting and advise us of any negative votes.

We shall now proceed with the business of this great constituent gathering, this solemn assembly, which is convened here in Salt Lake City and, by extension, in many areas of the world.

The First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles

The First Presidency will please arise. It is proposed that we sustain Ezra Taft Benson as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Those in favor, please manifest it. Those opposed may manifest it.

It is proposed that we sustain Gordon B. Hinckley as First Counselor in the First Presidency of the Church and Thomas Spencer Monson as Second Counselor. Those in favor may manifest it. Those opposed may manifest it.

It is proposed that we sustain Marion G. Romney as President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles and Howard W. Hunter as Acting President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. Those in favor. Any opposed.

It is proposed that we sustain as members of the Council of the Twelve Apostles Marion G. Romney, Howard W. Hunter, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, and M. Russell Ballard. Those in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed.

It is proposed that we sustain the Counselors in the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators. Those in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed. The First Presidency will please be seated.

The members of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will please arise.

It is proposed that we sustain Ezra Taft Benson as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, together with his Counselors and members of the Council of the Twelve, as they have been presented and voted upon by the First Presidency. All in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed. You may be seated.

The following will please arise wherever they are: all ordained patriarchs; all ordained high priests, including members of the First Quorum of the Seventy and the Presiding Bishopric; all other seventies and all ordained elders, wherever you may be participating. It is proposed that we sustain Ezra Taft Benson as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, together with his Counselors and members of the Council of the Twelve Apostles as they have been presented and voted upon. All in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed may manifest it. Please be seated.

Will all of the Aaronic Priesthood please arise—that is, all ordained priests, teachers, and deacons. It is proposed that we sustain Ezra Taft Benson as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, together with his Counselors and members of the Council of the Twelve Apostles as previously presented and voted upon. All in favor, please indicate by the uplifted hand. Any opposed may so indicate it. You may be seated.

Will the entire congregation, including all of those who have stood previously, now arise. It is proposed that we sustain Ezra Taft Benson as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, together with his Counselors and members of the Council of the Twelve Apostles as they have been presented and voted upon. All in favor, please indicate by the uplifted hand. Any opposed, may so indicate it. Thank you; you may be seated.

Sustaining of other General Authorities

We shall now remain seated as we sustain other General Authorities and general officers of the Church. It is proposed that we sustain as the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy Carlos E. Asay, Dean L. Larsen, Richard G. Scott, Marion D. Hanks, William Grant Bangerter, Jack H. Goaslind, and Robert L. Backman. As further members of the First Quorum of the Seventy: A. Theodore Tuttle, Franklin D. Richards, Theodore M. Burton, Paul H. Dunn, Hartman Rector, Jr., Loren C. Dunn, Robert L. Simpson, Rex D. Pinegar, J. Thomas Fyans, Adney Y. Komatsu, Joseph B. Wirthlin, Gene R. Cook, Charles A. Didier, William R. Bradford, George P. Lee, John H. Groberg, Jacob de Jager, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Royden G. Derrick, Robert E. Wells, James M. Paramore, Hugh W. Pinnock, F. Enzo Busche, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Ronald E. Poelman, Derek A. Cuthbert, Rex C. Reeve, F. Burton Howard, Ted E. Brewerton, Angel Abrea, John K. Carmack, Russell C. Taylor, Robert B. Harbertson, Devere Harris, Spencer H. Osborn, Philip T. Sonntag, John Sonnenberg, F. Arthur Kay, Keith W. Wilcox, Victor L. Brown, H. Burke Peterson, J. Richard Clarke, Hans B. Ringger, Waldo P. Call, Helio R. Camargo.

Additionally, the following Brethren have been called as members of the First Quorum of the Seventy to serve for periods of approximately three years under the practice instituted in the April 1984 general conference: Hans Verlan Andersen, George I. Cannon, Francis M. Gibbons, Gardner H. Russell.

As the Presiding Bishopric: Robert D. Hales, Presiding Bishop; Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor; Glenn L. Pace, Second Counselor.

As Emeritus Brethren: Eldred G. Smith, Patriarch Emeritus, and the following Seventies with emeritus status:

Sterling W. Sill, Henry D. Taylor, Bernard P. Brockbank, James A. Cullimore, Joseph Anderson, John H. Vandenberg, O. Leslie Stone. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

Sustaining of general officers of the Church

Sister Patricia T. Holland, who has served as first counselor in the general presidency of the Young Women, is the wife of President Jeffrey R. Holland of Brigham Young University. The many demands upon her time incident to her husband's responsibilities, as well as her family responsibilities and the burden of traveling to and from Provo, have made it advisable to extend to her an honorable release. We likewise release Sister Maureen J. Turley, second counselor in the Young Women presidency. All who wish to join in an expression of gratitude for the devoted service of these sisters in these respective callings may indicate by the uplifted hand.

Sister Ardeth G. Kapp, president of the Young Women, has asked Sister Maureen J. Turley to serve as her first counselor and Sister Jayne Broadbent Malan to serve as her second counselor. Those in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed by the same sign.

It is proposed that we sustain all other general officers and board members as presently constituted, together with all Regional Representatives who at present are serving. All in favor, please indicate it. Any opposed.

With hearts, faith, and prayers

President Benson, insofar as I have been able to observe, the voting in the Tabernacle has been unanimous in favor of the proposals made. Any negative votes in any other assemblies will be noted and brought to our attention.

Thank you, brothers and sisters, for your sustaining vote. We feel that you have sustained us not only with your hands but also with your hearts and your faith and prayers, which we so urgently need, and pray that you will continue to do so.

We shall ask now that Elders Andersen, Cannon, Gibbons, and Russell come forward and take their places with the First Quorum of the Seventy, and we invite Sister Malan also to come forward and sit with Sister Kapp.

President Hinckley

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet." Following the singing of that number, we have just a few minutes, perhaps about seven minutes before we go forward with the rest of the scheduled program, and we shall ask Brother Gibbons, who has served as secretary to the First Presidency over a long period of time, to come and make a brief expression in behalf of all of these Brethren whom we have sustained in these responsibilities this day.

The choir and congregation sang "We Thank Thee, O God, for Prophet."

Elder Francis M. Gibbons

Essence of life is change

My beloved brethren and sisters, the essence of life is change. It was just sixteen years ago this day that I sat in the audience as a bishop and sustained

President Joseph Fielding Smith as the President of the Church along with his Counselors, President Harold B. Lee and President N. Eldon Tanner. Sustained at that conference also was Elder Boyd K. Packer, sustained as a member

of the Twelve; from the position he now occupies on the stand, you can see the enormous change that has taken place in that short period of sixteen years.

Also sustained at that conference were Elders William Bennett, Joseph Anderson, and David B. Haight as Assistants to the Twelve. Elder Bennett, of course, has passed away. Elder Haight, now a member of the Twelve, and Elder Anderson are still with us. Elder Anderson is in his ninety-seventh year.

Meeting with prophets of God

Elder Anderson, who had been the secretary to the First Presidency for almost fifty years, was a member of the ward of which I was bishop at the time, and through an extraordinary series of circumstances that I will not mention here, three days after his call I found myself in the first meeting of the First Presidency that I was privileged to attend. Since that day sixteen years ago, it has been my blessing to have met on almost a daily basis during the work week with the prophets of God. Each of them has shown special qualities. Each of them has filled a special role. Each of them we have loved and sustained and appreciated. I can today without any qualification raise my hand in full support and love for President Ezra Taft Benson, President Gordon B. Hinckley, and President Thomas S. Monson. These are truly prophets, seers, and revelators of the living God. And what a blessing it is for us to be members of a church that is directed through direct revelation from God on high.

I suppose at a time like this one naturally reflects about his roots. My great-great-grandfather, Vinson Knight, was a member of the bishopric of the Kirtland Ward, the first ward in the Church. He served under Bishop Newel K. Whitney. He later served as the bishop pro tem, as it was called at the time, of the ward at Adam-Ondi-Ahman. His daughter, Rizpah, my great-grandmother, tells of having

picked berries on the banks of the Grand River, as it flows by Adam-Ondi-Ahman.

Vinson Knight later became the bishop of the lower ward in Nauvoo, the ward in which both President Joseph Smith and President Brigham Young resided. His wife, Martha McBride Knight, was one of the charter members of the Relief Society.

I think of these stalwart people, their dedication, and their faith. The daughter of Vinson and Martha married a young man named Andrew Smith Gibbons. They were teenagers in Kirtland. After they married, Rizpah gave birth to her first child, my grandfather Andrew Vinson Gibbons, in Council Bluffs, Iowa, near Winter Quarters. Andrew was assigned as one of the members of Brigham Young's pioneer company that arrived in the Salt Lake Valley July 24, 1847, and ended up across the river in Arizona, where I was born in the little town of St. Johns. I have told my friends over the years that if you can't spot it on the map, St. Johns is fifteen miles east of Concho. To many, it's the end of the earth; but to those of us who were born there, it's the center of the earth. I pay honor and respect to these ancestors, as well as to my dear wife and children and grandchildren, to all of our friends and relatives, and to the many associates with whom we have been privileged to labor over the years.

Witness of the Spirit

As you can appreciate, I accept this assignment with trepidation. I accept it with humility. I accept it without qualification. I desire to serve faithfully and with diligence. I pledge to President Benson and his Counselors that they will never make a call upon me but that I will strive to fill it to the very best of my ability.

As a young man in the mission field over forty years ago, I received a witness of the Spirit. From that experience I learned by spiritual means that God lives, that Jesus Christ is his son,

that he is the head of the Church, that the Church is lead by prophets, seers, and revelators. I therefore sustain all of those who have preceded this incumbent First Presidency, and I certainly sustain and support them as prophets, seers, and revelators.

As one final word I would say that I came to the position of secretary to the First Presidency sixteen years ago with a full knowledge of the significance of the Church and of the status of its leaders. I have seen nothing in those intervening years that would cause me to question in any respect either the doctrines of the Church, the practices of the Church, and most assuredly the integrity of those who head it. I am their witness. I testify that they are honorable, upright, dedicated men of integrity committed to teaching the principles of the gospel, who strive with all of their might to prepare a people ready for the return of the head of the Church, Jesus Christ, at his second coming. Of this I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

I should say that Brother Gibbons has served as a bishop, a stake president, he is a patriarch, he was an attorney by profession, and for sixteen years was secretary to the First Presidency.

Brother Cannon could bear similar testimony, as could Brother Andersen, and Brother Russell. Brother Cannon has served as bishop, a mission president, a patriarch, and is now serving as a stake president; he is a grandson of President Heber J. Grant. Brother Andersen served in a stake presidency, is now serving as a patriarch, has served three missions, is an accounting instructor (a CPA), and an attorney with degrees in law from two great law schools of Stanford and Harvard. Brother Gardner has served as a distinguished business leader, as a mission

president, as a Regional Representative. All well-qualified men.

Beverly Benson Walker, daughter of President Benson, accompanied by Robert Cundick at the organ, will sing "O Divine Redeemer."

Before hearing her, we should like to express appreciation and our sincere gratitude to all who have provided the music for this great conference—to the Tabernacle Choir, the combined institute choir from Northern Utah, the returned missionary choir from Brigham Young University, their conductors, and organists.

We thank our city officials for the cooperation given this conference, the Relief Society and Church Health Unit nurses who have been on hand to render service, and the ushers and interpreters.

We express appreciation to the local and national press representatives for the coverage given to the conference and to the owners and managers of the many radio and television stations and cable systems who have given public service time to carry sessions of this conference in many countries.

Sister Walker will now sing for us, following which we shall be pleased and honored to listen to President Ezra Taft Benson, who will be the concluding speaker of the conference.

The Tabernacle Choir will then sing "How Firm a Foundation, Ye Saints of the Lord." The benediction will be offered by Elder Spencer H. Osborn of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

This conference will then stand adjourned for six months. Thank you, brethren and sisters, for all that you have done to make of this a truly glorious occasion.

Sister Beverly Benson Walker sang "O Divine Redeemer."

President Ezra Taft Benson

My beloved brethren and sisters, I wish to testify to you that the Lord Jesus Christ stands at the head of His church—even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We are His earthly stewards—we hold His priesthood, administer His ordinances, preach His gospel, and build up His kingdom.

Dependence upon the Lord

I have not words to express my gratitude to God, the Father of our spirits, to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Ghost, the Testator.

I wish to convey my appreciation to all those who raised their hands in a covenant to the Lord to sustain me. I have felt the expression of your hearts and your commitment to the Lord as your hands pointed heavenward.

I am reminded how Moses up on the hill raised his arms for the victory of the armies of Israel. As long as his arms were raised, Israel prevailed, but when they dropped from weariness, then the enemy prevailed. And so Aaron and Hur “stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side,” and Israel was victorious (Exodus 17:12). So will we be victorious as we hold up the arms of the Lord’s anointed servants.

I have been aware of those who preceded me in this office as President of the Church. I have felt very keenly my dependence upon the Lord and the absolute necessity of relying upon Him for His direction in the conduct of the affairs of the Church as those in the past have done.

Blessings of mortality

I have been blessed in mortality with noble parents and supportive brothers and sisters. God raised up for me a choice companion. In her

stewardship from the Lord, she has lived outside herself in love by being a great helpmate and noble mother. Our children have been loyal to the Lord and to us.

I am grateful for the strong counselors whom the Lord has provided me—President Gordon B. Hinckley and President Thomas S. Monson. Both have been prepared by the Lord for the labor they are performing. Each has been and is now a great blessing to the kingdom of God, and I thank Him for them.

I love the members of the Council of the Twelve, with whom I have been privileged to labor most closely over the years. It has also been a joy to serve with members of the First Quorum of the Seventy and the Presiding Bishopric.

Unity and support in Church

There is a great spirit of unity among the General Authorities of the Church. That unity is very real and most important, for the Lord has said, “If ye are not one ye are not mine” (D&C 38:27).

We shall continue to work together as Brethren, united in one purpose—to move forward the work of the Lord.

We are so appreciative of the great and loyal support of the leaders and members of the Church throughout the world. Many have written and given assurances of their love and prayers. We stand in need of that prayerful support every day.

What a privilege it is to serve in the kingdom of God. In this work it is the Spirit that counts—wherever we serve. I know I must rely on the Spirit. Let us obtain that Spirit and be faithful members of the Church, devoted children and parents, effective home teachers, edifying instructors, inspired ward and stake leaders. God bless you

all for your noble labors in building the kingdom.

If there be any division among us, let us set aside anything of this kind and join ranks in the great responsibility to move forward the work of the Lord. If there be those who have become disaffected, we reach out to you in the pure love of Christ and stand ready to assist and welcome you back in full fellowship in the Church.

A sacred responsibility—

We have a sacred responsibility to fulfill the threefold mission of the Church—first, to teach the gospel to the world; second, to strengthen the membership of the Church wherever they may be; third, to move forward the work of salvation for the dead.

Let us consider each of these in turn.

To teach the gospel to the world

The world needs the gospel, and we are charged by command of the Lord and through our Abrahamic lineage to spread it. Every young man in this Church should be qualified for a mission and then should go. Many sisters may also serve missions. I am grateful my wife went on a mission and that we have granddaughters and grandsons in the mission field.

There is no greater joy than bringing souls to Christ. Participation in this great work blesses the convert, blesses the missionary, and blesses those who support the missionary.

Many older couples could serve missions. In so doing, they will find that a mission blesses their children, their grandchildren, and their great-grandchildren in a way that could not otherwise be done. It will set a great example for their posterity.

I am so glad my father accepted a mission call, leaving mother at home with seven children and with the eighth being born while Father was in the mission field. His letters, which my faithful mother read to us children,

brought a spirit of missionary work into that home that never left it. All the sons went on at least one mission, and eventually all the daughters served missions.

To strengthen the membership of the Church

The second mission of the Church is to strengthen the membership of the Church.

We need to learn the will of the Lord for us and then do it, as President Kimball emphasized. His will is made manifest through the standard works, His anointed servants, and personal revelation.

There is a book we need to study daily, both as individuals and as families, namely the Book of Mormon. I love that book. It is the book that will get a person nearer to God by abiding by its precepts than any other book. (See Book of Mormon, Introduction.) President Romney recommended studying it half an hour each day. I commend that practice to you. I've always enjoyed reading the scriptures and do so on a daily basis individually and with my beloved wife.

Children, support your parents in their efforts to have daily family scripture study. Pray for them as they pray for you. The adversary does not want scripture study to take place in our homes, and so he will create problems if he can. But we must persist.

Perhaps each family member can take a turn reading a verse at a time. Comments could follow. Maybe you can study by subject. Perhaps assignments might be made.

To move forward the work of salvation for the dead

The third mission of the Church is to move forward the work of salvation for the dead.

As a child, I appreciated the reverent discussions I had with my mother as she ironed her temple clothes. I am

grateful for the weekly temple sessions that Sister Benson and I enjoy together.

The temple is the house of the Lord. Our attendance there blesses the dead and also blesses us, for it is a house of revelation.

Now we must work together to accomplish these three great, all-encompassing responsibilities.

Reemphasize the Book of Mormon

In the opening session of this conference we talked about cleansing the inner vessel. And so we must.

The Lord inspired His servant Lorenzo Snow to reemphasize the principle of tithing to redeem the Church from financial bondage. In those days the General Authorities took that message to the members of the Church.

Now, in our day, the Lord has revealed the need to reemphasize the Book of Mormon to get the Church and all the children of Zion out from under condemnation—the scourge and judgment. (See D&C 84:54–58.) This message must be carried to the members of the Church throughout the world.

Christ is at the helm

Now, as we come to the close of this great conference, I want you to know that I know that Christ is at the helm. This is His world. This is His Church. His purposes will be accomplished.

Christ is our ideal. He is our exemplar. What manner of men and women should we be? Even as He is. (See 3 Nephi 27:27.) The best measure of true greatness is how Christlike we are.

The Book of Mormon declares that “every thing which inviteth and enticeth to do good, and to love God, and to serve him, is inspired of God.”

And “whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do evil, and believe not in Christ, and deny him, and serve not God, then ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of the devil” (Moroni 7:13, 17).

Let us use that standard to judge what we read, the music we hear, the entertainment we watch, the thoughts we think. Let us be more Christlike.

I assure you of my love and God’s love for all of His children in every part of the world.

Blessing of increased discernment and understanding

Now, in the authority of the sacred priesthood in me vested, I invoke my blessing upon the Latter-day Saints and upon good people everywhere.

I bless you with increased discernment to judge between Christ and anti-Christ. I bless you with increased power to do good and to resist evil. I bless you with increased *understanding* of the Book of Mormon. I promise you that from this moment forward, if we will daily sup from its pages and abide by its precepts, God will pour out upon each child of Zion and the Church a blessing hitherto unknown—and we will plead to the Lord that He will begin to lift the condemnation—the scourge and judgment. Of this I bear solemn witness.

I testify that the Book of Mormon is the word of God. Jesus is the Christ. Joseph Smith is His prophet. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is true. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang “How Firm a Foundation.”

Elder Spencer H. Osborn offered the benediction.

SALT LAKE TABERNACLE CHOIR AND ORGAN BROADCAST

The following broadcast, announced by J. Spencer Kinard and originating with KSL Radio and Television, Salt Lake City, Utah, was presented from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 6, 1986, through the courtesy of the Columbia Broadcasting System's network throughout the United States, parts of Canada, and through other facilities to several points overseas:

Announcer: Once more we welcome you within these walls with Music and the Spoken Word from the crossroads of the West.

CBS and its affiliated stations bring you at this hour the Mormon Tabernacle Choir from Temple Square in Salt Lake City, with Jerold Ottley conducting the choir, John Longhurst, Tabernacle organist, and the Spoken Word given by Spencer Kinard.

(Choir without announcement: "Halleluia Sing!"—Wilkinson)

Announcer: "Christ the Lord is risen, Halleluia Sing!" The Tabernacle Choir has sung an anthem of the season by Scott Wilkinson.

As word spread among his disciples that Jesus was indeed risen from the dead, he appeared to the Apostles gathered at Jerusalem, saying, "Peace be unto you." But they were terrified and supposed they had seen a spirit. With tenderness and sympathy, Jesus said to them, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: Handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have."

Recalling the events of the Savior's crucifixion and resurrection, the choir sings a hymn tune by John H. Gower with text by Cecil Francis Alexander: "There Is a Green Hill Far Away." The choral setting is by Robert Manookin.

(Choir: "There Is a Green Hill Far Away"—Gower/Manookin)

Announcer: Tabernacle organist, John Longhurst, plays "Andantino" from the second suite by Leon Boellmann.

(Organ: "Andantino" — Boellmann)

Announcer: When separated from the complex theologies, the religious jargon, and sectarian interpretations, Christianity is the most sublime and yet simplistic morality to ever befall man.

The doctrines, as taught by Jesus, are within the comprehension of anyone. The central creed of Christianity is simply to do good—to do good whenever, wherever, and to whomever we can. This is to be a Christian.

It is to believe that feeding the hungry is more important than religious ritual and repetition. It is to match deeds to thoughts, placing human service above lip service, making our home, our office, our neighborhood the production lab for Christian ideals.

To be a Christian is to live with gratitude, with empathy, with gentleness and faith; to seek refinement rather than extravagance; to be worthy before popular; to prefer intrinsic beauty over faddish style.

We will find the Christian wherever there is human need: mowing the lawn of an injured neighbor, standing watch over the sickbed of children, offering a loan to lighten the load of a worthy friend. We will discover his outstretched arms about the huddled shoulders of the mother who has lost an infant to crib death, of the new divorcee who is afraid of the world and the future, of the boy who sat out the whole game on the bench.

The Christian is made up of the charity which gives without looking back, the humility which kneels when

no one is looking, and the faith which believes when the evidence casts doubt.

The commandments, the parables, and the Beatitudes are not only written in the Christian's Bible and hymnbook but also upon the fleshy tablets of his heart, where they are used for daily reference. For the true Christian is not only a person of theory but also of application. The first rule of negotiation in business dealings is the Golden Rule. Law is used to gain justice, not money. Peace is made at home as well as at sporting events. And marriage is based on the Christian ideals of equality and mutual respect.

The true Christian is a follower in word and deed of Him who became the servant of all: she is majesty in homespun clothing, manhood tempered by tears, royalty beneath a crown of thorns.

Like the silent candle which glows on through the night—quietly, graciously, freely shedding its light—the Christian lives on, grateful for the life that now is and for the promise of that which is to come.

(Choir without announcement: "O My Father"—McGranaham/Lyon)

Announcer: The choir has sung Laurence Lyon's choral arrangement of "O My Father," a nineteenth century hymn by James McGranaham with text by Eliza R. Snow.

"He is risen! Let the whole wide earth rejoice." Such thoughts and words must have spread like wildfire through Jerusalem to the joy of every follower of Christ. So important was

the event that still today we speak and sing of it. "Death is conquered, man is free. Christ has won the victory." The words, again, are by Cecil Francis Alexander; the music is that of Joachim Neander.

(Choir: "He Is Risen!"—Neander)

Announcer: In closing, the Tabernacle Choir sings "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," Gilbert Martin's moving setting of a hymn by Lowell Mason and Isaac Watts that sings of the sacrifice of Christ, of His "love so amazing, so divine."

(Choir: "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"—Martin)

Announcer: Again we leave you from within the shadows of the everlasting hills. May peace be with you this day . . . and always.

Announcer (on radio): This concludes the two-thousand, nine-hundred, fifty-fifth performance continuing the fifty-seventh year of this traditional broadcast from the Mormon Tabernacle on Temple Square, brought to you by CBS and its affiliated stations, originating with Station KSL in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Jerold Ottley conducted the choir, John Longhurst was at the organ, the Spoken Word was given by Spencer Kinard.

In another seven days at this same hour, Music and the Spoken Word will be heard again from the crossroads of the West.

This is the CBS Radio Network.

SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE MUSIC

The Tabernacle Choir furnished the choral numbers for the Saturday morning, Sunday morning, and Sunday afternoon sessions of the conference with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducting.

The music for the Saturday afternoon session was provided by a combined institute choir from Utah Technical College, LDS Business College, University of Utah, Weber State College, and Utah State University directed by Don B. Castleton.

At the general priesthood meeting a returned missionary choir from Brigham Young University under the direction of Stephen Bardsley furnished the music.

Prelude, postlude, and interlude music and accompaniments on the Tab-

ernacle organ throughout the conference sessions were played by Robert Cundick, John Longhurst, and Clay Christiansen, Tabernacle organists.

F. Michael Watson
Clerk of the Conference

INDEX

A

Ashton, Elder Marvin J.	83
"Be of good cheer"; "For I the Lord am with you"; Fruits of cheerfulness; Beautiful "good cheer" lady; Changed a family from despair; Avoid self-deceit; Self-mastery must triumph; Commit to principles; Use what comes wisely; Be of good cheer, and not fear	
Auditor's Report 1985	21
Authorities and Officers, Sustaining of General	93
Authorities Present, General	1
Authorities Present, Other	2

B

Ballard, Elder M. Russell	14
Calling of an Apostle; South America dedicated; Early missionary work—South America; Growth of the Church; Faith, commitment, and love for the Lord; Responsibility to prepare for temple blessings; Understanding of the Lord's plan; Power of priesthood to bless lives of the Saints	
Benson, President Ezra Taft (Fifth Session)	98
Dependence upon the Lord; Blessings of mortality; Unity and support in Church; A sacred responsibility—; To teach the gospel to the world; To strengthen the membership of the Church; To move forward the work of salvation for the dead; Reemphasize the Book of Mormon; Christ is at the helm; Blessing of increased discernment and understanding	
Benson, President Ezra Taft (First Session)	3
Dedication, devotion, and service; Watchman—what of the night?; Changed people!; Sexual immorality; Do more with the Book of Mormon; President Romney on reading the Book of Mormon; Pride; "Humble yourselves before God"; Not <i>my</i> will but <i>thine</i> ; The "learned, and the rich"; Must cleanse the inner vessel	
Benson, President Ezra Taft (Priesthood Meeting)	55
Youth of the noble birthright; Honor the family unit; Program of daily reading and pondering scriptures; Patriarchal blessing; Attendance at Church meetings; Set your goals to attain excellence; Our duty is to preach the gospel; Respond to His call; Live clean life; Repentance and miracle of forgiveness; Pernicious evils; "Be ye clean"; Proper dating; Prepare to enter mission "on the run"; Fathers, be an example; Priesthood leaders, stay close to your young men; What the Lord would have you hear	

C

Conference Music, Summary of	102
------------------------------------	-----

D

de Jager, Elder Jacob	90
“Word deafness”; Some suffer badly from <i>logokophosis</i> ; Faith relationship with God and Jesus Christ; Greatest news that Jesus lives; Restored gospel a single tune for all; Candle of understanding; Good works for future generations	

E

Edling, Brother Wilford G. (Auditor’s Report 1985)	21
--	----

F

Faust, Elder James E.	23
Care for poor and needy, and become self-reliant; First prescription: Practice thrift and frugality; Second prescription: Seek to be independent; Third prescription: Be industrious; Fourth prescription: Become self-reliant; Fifth prescription: Strive to have a year’s supply of food and clothing; A lamp to light the way	
Fifth Session	83
First Day—Afternoon Meeting	20
First Day—Morning Meeting	2
First Session	2
Fourth Session	60

G

General Authorities and Officers, Sustaining of	93
General Authorities Present	1
General Priesthood Meeting	42
Gibbons, Elder Francis M.	95
Essence of life is change; Meeting with prophets of God; Witness of the Spirit	

Goasland, Elder Jack H. 70

Happiness—source is within; “Men are, that they might have joy”; The “plan of happiness”; Sin—contrary to nature of God; Deliberate decision to do good brings happiness; Preserve happiness in midst of trouble and trial; Service gives capacity to endure own trials; “Are we having fun yet, experiencing true happiness?”

H**Haight, Elder David B. 7**

Principle of common consent; Continuous revelation from the Lord; “Give heed unto all his words and commandments”; Revelation from the Lord and sustaining by the people; Prophet called of God; Calling and preparation of President Ezra Taft Benson; Europe after World War II; U.S. Secretary of Agriculture; Love for all people and for his family; Witness for Jesus Christ

Hales, Bishop Robert D. 35

Welfare taught by prophets; 1. The welfare plan is an integral part of the plan of salvation; 2. The scriptures provide the spiritual framework for the welfare plan; 3. The welfare plan builds faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; 4. By living welfare principles, we can develop self-reliance; 5. The welfare plan builds love and compassion for our fellowmen; 6. The welfare plan sanctifies both the giver and the receiver; 7. The welfare plan builds a Zion people

Hinckley, President Gordon B. (Fourth Session) 61

An unfolding miracle; Personal testimony of President Spencer W. Kimball; Transition of authority; Personal testimony of President Ezra Taft Benson; Gospel meets the needs spiritually, intellectually, morally, physically; Opportunity of eternal life; Spiritual strength; Example of intellectual and spiritual learning; Thirteenth article of faith; Moral strength; Fortify against moral sin; Promises of the Word of Wisdom; God be thanked

Hinckley, President Gordon B. (Priesthood Meeting) 51

The question of a mission; Personal missionary experience; An instrument in the Lord’s hands; Count your blessings; The greatest investment; The Church, the Lord, and the world need you; William R. Sheffield; Become examples and teach the word of God

Hunter, President Howard W. 17

Christ conquered death; Easter; Triumph over physical and spiritual death; Witnesses of the Resurrection; Apostles as witnesses; Special witnesses of the name of Christ; Apostolic witness of the Resurrection

M

- Maxwell, Elder Neal A.** 43
 “Called and prepared from the foundation of the world”; Scriptural “finds”; Confirmation of premortal existence; The grand goal; Search, ponder and live by these precious truths; Chastening, patience, and divine purpose; Glimpses of the City of God; Be added upon; Called in the “there and then” for duties “here and now”; Duties as doers and messengers; Doctrinal illiteracy
- Monson, President Thomas S. (Fourth Session)** 78
 Anniversary of organization of the Church; Anniversary of Church welfare program; Care for the poor, needy, downtrodden; Counseled by President J. Reuben Clark; President Harold B. Lee teaches role of Aaronic Priesthood; President Romney teaches from scriptures; The spirit of welfare work; Presidential task force; Prepared for emergencies?; Ward welfare work—“Mein Bruder”; Provident plan, precious promise
- Monson, President Thomas S. (Priesthood Meeting)** 47
 “Be one”; A treasure truth! A profound philosophy!; The call of duty; Magnify your calling; Duty as a bishop; “Leave unto the Lord the rest”; To those who obey Him
- Music, Summary of Conference** 102

N

- Nelson, Elder Russell M.** 31
 Poor and needy always with us; Old Testament: Blessings to those who care for the poor; New Testament: A binding obligation to care for the poor; Book of Mormon: Obligation for poor; Doctrine and Covenants: Relief to the poor and needy; “In mine own way”; The Lord’s prescription; Reliance on self, then family, then the Church; “We have so much!”; In the Lord’s “own way”

O

- Oaks, Elder Dallin H.** 65
 “Great pollutions upon the face of the earth”; Commandments against profanity; Using names of Father and Son without authority; Take upon us the name of Christ; Pray unto the Father; Sacred names of Elohim and Jehovah; Signs that follow the believer; Melchizedek Priesthood; Profanity profoundly offensive; Relinquish companionship of Spirit; Vulgarly pollutes; No artificial boosters; “Our words will condemn us”; Encourage others to abstain from profanity
- Obituaries** 23

P

- Pace, Bishop Glenn L.** 27
 Meetings with President Marion G. Romney; Purpose of welfare program; Seek after the poor; Principles and objectives; Principles and programs; “Welfare program” in other countries; *Disposition* to do good; Generosity and compassion of members; Create independence and self-reliance; Challenges of our generation
- Packer, Elder Boyd K.** 73
 The Book of Mormon; Writers of the Book of Mormon; Large plates of Nephi; Small plates of Nephi; “The things of my soul”; Vision of the tree of life; Another testament of Jesus Christ; Prophecies of Isaiah; Book of Mormon verifies Bible; Isaiah quoted in New Testament; “Ye may know the truth of all things”; Direct revelation to you
- Paramore, Elder James M.** 87
 “My gratitude knows no bounds”; “When you lose the Spirit”; Servant, minister, friend; A holy gift; Ammon ministering among Lamanites; Promise to those who minister, serve, love, and teach the gospel
- Perry, Elder L. Tom** 38
 Good and difficult times; The law of the fast; First purpose: Contributions to assist needy; The Lord’s system; Second purpose: Fasting beneficial to us physically; Third purpose: Increase humility and spirituality; Testimony of this inspired program
- Priesthood Meeting, General** 42

S

- Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir and Organ Broadcast** 101
- Scott, Elder Richard G.** 11
 We love you; Come back; Apply the teachings from the Book of Mormon; Forgiveness through faith in Christ; Selfishness at root of sin; The Lord will forgive; Christ can bring salvation; The miracle of forgiveness; Book of Mormon and Jesus Christ
- Second Day—Afternoon Meeting** 83
- Second Day—Morning Meeting** 60
- Second Session** 20

Sheffield, Brother William R.	53
From judgeship to divinity school; A very special ward; Joseph Smith story; Testimony, I know	
Solemn Assembly	93
An invitation to participate; The First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles; Sustaining of other General Authorities; Sustaining of general officers of the Church; With hearts, faith, and prayers	
Statistical Report 1985	22
Summary of Conference Music	102
Sustaining of General Authorities and Officers	93
T	
Tabernacle Choir and Organ Broadcast, Salt Lake	101
Third Session	42
W	
Watson, Brother F. Michael	22

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY
SAINTS